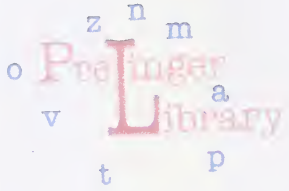
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"*The Story of our Lives from Year to Year.*"—SHAKESPEARE.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

A Weekly Journal.

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS, JUN.

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED HOUSEHOLD WORDS.

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
ABBOTSFORD	41
Advertisements	329
African Diamond Fields	617
America, Lecturing in	317
American Lyceums	317
American Phrases	270
Animals, Protective Tints of	469
Arthur's Seat	37
Artist at Work, An	594
BADAJOZ, Siege of	296
Bannockburn, Battle of	154
Batley, Rags Sent to	441
Batley Woollen Works	441
Battle-Field, A	104
Bethany and Bethlehem	61
Big "Box o' Whustles," A	201
Bill Posting Advertisements	329
Bismarck	127
Bluff Harry	297
Boar Hunt in Germany	91
Bombay, A Day at	584
Borrowing Trouble	162
Borthwick Castle	38
Bradford to Brindisi	252, 276
Brigands	256
Bunkum	272
Butterflies and Moths, Tints of	472
CACKLERS	249
Canvas Under Canvas	594
Capture of a Convoy	301
Carlisle, The Siege of	558
Carthage, Siege of	56
Cave of Adullam	33
Cheese	488
Christmas Day in the East	84
Christmas Under a Cloud	101
Christmas Under the Puritans	101
Ciudad Rodrigo	294
City of Honest Imposture, The	440
Clocks and Hour Glasses	419
Cloth Manufactures	441
Constantinople, Siege of	59
Cophetua the Second	565
Corvin, Colonel, Life of	321
Country Scamps	8
Crichton Castle	38
Cromwell and Christmas	104
Cuba, A State of Siege in	610
Cuba, Prison Life in	222
Cyprus, The Three-Eyed Man of	516
DARWIN'S Descent of Man	445
Day at Bombay, A	584
Dead Sea, The	180
Dear Davie	379
Descent of Man, The	445
Defence of London	492
Defence of Saragossa	286
Desirable Tenant, A	485
Desert, In Danger in the	450
Diamond Fields of Africa	617
Doctor's Mixture, The	1
25, 49, 73, 97, 121, 145, 187, 211	
Doctor Tyndall on Science and Imagination	174
Dryburgh Abbey	151
EAST, Travels in the, 15, 29, 35, 60, 84, 180	
Eddy's, Mr., Scheme for Defence of London	496
Edinburgh	37
Entertainment at Mopetown	539
Epigram Writers	34
Evenings at Mopetown	539, 607
FAIRS	393
Falkirk, The Battle of	153
Famous old Sieges	54
Field Hospital, In a	372
Fishes, Poisonous	366
Fishes, The Thoughts of	535
Foreign Invaders	133
Fortification of London	492
France, May-Day in	542
France, The Trianons at Versailles	5
French Refugees	134
French in London	134
From Bradford to Brindisi	252, 276
GALA, The River	39
General Reader, The	465
German Sport	91
German Railway Stations	254
German-French War Scenes	104
157, 205, 301, 384, 372, 399	
Ghost Stories, A String of	77
Ghouls and Vampyres	597
Gloomy Views	162
Golightly, Mrs.	464
Grand Duke of Mecklenburgh's Corps	399
Greek Brigands	255
HOLBORN Races	12
Holborn Theatre, Races at the	12
Holy Sepulchre, Church of the	18
Horses and Hedges	463
Hotel, A, Visitor out of Season	165
Household Ornaments	416
House Hunting	485
How it Happened	67
How to See India	420
IGNIS Fatuus	552
In Danger in the Desert	450
India, A Day at Bombay	584
India, How to See	420
Insects, Protective Tints of	469
Institutions	391
In the Field with the Prussians:	
A Battle-Field	104
Requisitioning	157
A Perilous Position	205
A Convoy Captured, and how we escaped	301
A Sortie from Metz	348
Day's Routine in a Field Hospital	372
With the Grand Duke of Mecklenburgh's Corps	399
In the Penguin's Arms	165
Italian Peasant Stories	324
JACK Cade's Riots	494
Jericho, the City of	184
Jericho Theatre	111
Jerusalem	15
Jerusalem, The Siege of	57
Jordon, The River	183
LAST Town Besieged in England	558
Leaves from Old London Life	232
Life of Adventure, A	321
Lights, Will o' the Wisp	352
Linlithgow	151
London, Defence of	494
London, Fortification of	492
London, Old, News	232
London Parcel Post	570
London Sieges	492
London Wall	492
London Wants	305
Loosefish, Mr.	464
Lost Literary Art, A	34
Lyceums and Lecturing in America	317
Lynch Law	394
MADAME Crowl's Ghost	114
Magdeburg, Siege of	293
Marked for the Knife	46
Marriage of English Princesses	376
May-Day among the Mules	542
May Queen, The	395
Melrose Abbey	39
Mendelsshon Jackson Family	608
Metz, A Sortie from	348
Military Talkers and Doers	64
Miss Ponsonby's Companion	236
259, 284, 507, 332, 356	
Mopetown, Evenings at	539, 607
Morro Castle, In Prison in	223
Mount Olivet	15
Mountain's, Mrs., Entertainment	539
My Boy in India	420
Mules, May-Day Among the	542
Munich	276
My Census Paper	521
My New Idea	403, 427
NEWARK Castle	151
New Year's Day in Scotland	108
Numantia, Siege of	54
OLD Household Ornaments	416
Old London News	232
Old London Wall	492
Old Project and a New One, An	570
Olives, The Mount of	15
Omnibus Dinner, The	42
Oloron, May-Day at	542
Only on the Box	199
Organ-building	201
Ornaments of the Household	416
Overland Route	422
PARCEL Delivery, An Old Scheme for	570
Parcel Post Delivery	570
Peace	397
Peace of God, The	398
Peace, Treaties of	423

PAGE

Penguin's Arms, The . . . 165
Perturbed Spirit, A 141
Philiphaugh Castle 151
Plogarrian . 473, 498, 523, 547, 572
Poisonous Fishes . . . 366
Popular American Phrases . . 270
Post Office Parcel Delivery . . 571
Princesses (English) Marriages of 376
Prison Life in Cuba . . . 222
Protective Resemblances . . 469
Prussia, Winter Shooting in . . 91
Prussia, Sporting in . . . 91
Prussian Revolution, A . . . 321
Puffing Advertisements . . . 329
Puritans Putting Down Holidays . 101

RACKSTRAW'S Client . . 587, 613
Rags 441
Raids Over the Border:
The Land of Scott . . 37, 150
Refugees 134
Requisitioning 157
Roadways, New Material of . . 306
Robert Bruce, Tomb of . . . 40
Rose and the Key, The . . . 169
133, 217, 241, 265, 289, 313, 337, 361, 385, 409, 433, 457, 481, 505, 529, 553, 577, 601
Rosière, The 395
Royal Marriages 376

SAGUNTUM, Siege of . . . 54
Salisbury Crags 37
Saltaire 185
Saragossa, The Defence of . . 280
Scamps of the Village, The . . 8
Science and Imagination . . 174
Scorpion Fish 371
Scotland, Tour in 37, 150
Scotland, New Year's Day in . 108
Sea Monsters 371
Seven Dials, Sunday in . . . 511
Siege of Badajoz 296
Siege of Carlisle 558
Siege of Ciudad Rodrigo . . 294
Siege of Magdeburg . . . 293
Siege of Saragossa . . . 280
Sieges in Ancient History . . 54
Sieges of London 492
Sir Thomas Wyatt's Rebellion . 494
Sir Walter Scott's Home . . 41
Six Months in the East:
At Jerusalem 15
The Wilderness of Judæa . . 29
Cave of Adullam . . . 33
Bethany and Bethlehem . . 60

PAGE

Christmas Day in the East . 84
The Dead Sea, The Jordan, and Jericho 180
Smoking 395
Social Brigandage 257
Social Sinners 463
Solar Furnace, The 324
Some Famous Treaties . . . 423
Spiritual Séance, A 297
South of France, May-Day in the . 542
State of Siege in Cuba . . . 610
Stories:
Cophetua the Second . . . 565
Dear Davie 379
How it Happened 67
In Danger in the Desert . . 450
In the Penguin's Arms . . 165
Madam Crowl's Ghost . . 114
Marked for the Knife . . 46
Miss Ponsonby's Companion . 236
259, 284, 307, 332, 356
My Census Paper 521
My New Idea 403, 427
Only on the Box 199
Perturbed Spirit 141
Plogarrian . 473, 499, 523, 547, 572
Rackstraw's Client . . 587, 613
Stories of Italian Peasantry . 342
String of Ghost Stories . . 77
Three-Eyed Man of Cyprus . 516
Stirling Castle 153
Stories of the Italian Peasantry . 324
Street Advertising 329
Street Shows 443
String of Ghost Stories . . . 77
Sun, The 324
Sunday in the Seven Dials . . 511
Surgeon's Day in a Field Hospital 372
Swindling Professors . . 138

Talkers and Doers 64
Telegraph Employment . . 232
Telegraph Service, The . . 228
Thames Embankment . . . 305
Theatre Royal, Jericho . . . 111
Theatre, Holborn, Races . . 12
Three-Eyed Man of Cyprus . . 516
Three Modern Sieges . . . 293
Thoughts on Puffing . . . 329
Thoughts of Fishes, The . . 535
Tints of Animals, &c. . . . 473
Tower of London 493
Travelling Entertainments . . 539
Treaties of Peace 423
Treaties, Historical . . . 423
Treaty of Westphalia . . . 424

PAGE

Trianons, The, at Versailles . . 5
T. S. 227

UNEXPECTED Expostulation, An . 465
Useless Warnings 138

VAMPYRES and Ghouls . . . 587
Vehmgericht, The 394
Versailles and the Trianons . . 5
Village Scamps 8

WANTED for London . . . 305
War between France and Prussia, Scenes in the, ... 104
157, 205, 301, 348, 372, 399
Wat Tyler's Rebellion . . . 494
Who Was He?, ... 20
Wild Boar Hunt in Germany . 91
William the Conqueror's March on London 493
Will o' the Wisp and his Relations 352
Wilderness of Judæa . . . 29
Winter Shooting in Prussia . . 91
Wool Workers at Saltaire . . 185
Woollen Works 441
Work of an Artist . . . 594
Wyatt's Rebellion . . . 494

YARROW River 150
Yorkshire Colony 185

POETRY.

PAGE

CHASTENED 472
Evening 396
Fredericus Rex (Old Fritz) . . 179
From Bordeaux to Paris, 1871 . 348
Good-Bye 372
German Hussar Songs . . . 227
Harp Unstrung, The . . . 420
Last Words 60
March 323
Morning on the Mountains . . 301
My Toy 157
'Neath the Scaur 251
News to Tell 516
Passing 565
Regrets 445
Sea Song 541
Sleeping Homestead, A . . . 108
Soldiers' Ballads 275
Song for Music, A 587
Sortie from Naumburg . . . 84
Squire Coe and his Daughters . 468
Swing, The 133
Two Points of View . . . 12
Wife's Vigil 205

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THE DOCTOR'S MIXTURE.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER XVI. AN AWKWARD MEETING.

On the next day the young lord began to find himself bored, and hearing there was a regiment quartered in the town, said he would go in and "beat them up," to see if he knew any of them. He returned at lunch-time, having "beat up" Colonel Bouchier, who he found "had known his father"—that very common link of acquaintance, like some useful nag which jogs between two distant posts.

The band played, it seemed, at three, so, with a yawn, he said he would stroll in and see what that was like. He then set off. The day passed by. Miss Jessie paid a visit to Mr. Leader in the library, and was shocked to find him there. She had thought she would have it all to herself. She had been thinking over the wonderfully interesting things he had been telling her last night. It grew dark—came to dressing-bell—to dinner—but the young lord had not returned. His mother suddenly recollected Colonel Bouchier—his father's old friend. The colonel had kept him to dine; that explained it all. The dinner passed over. Katey appeared, shy, and almost cowed. The poor girl at times felt her courage and resolution quite abandon her. It grew to ten, eleven o'clock; and it was not until past one o'clock that the young gentleman got to his bedroom.

At breakfast next morning he was plied with a shower of questions. He must have had a very agreeable party? How did he like the officers? He was a little embarrassed, as Katey alone noticed, laughing before he answered. "Oh, the officers were uncommon nice—that is, the colonel and a man they called Montague—a very good fellow." But where were the rest of the mess? "Oh, they weren't asked. I never said I was dining at the mess. I never thought of such a thing."

A nervousness came over Mrs. Leader. "And where did you dine, then, Lord Seaman?"

"Oh, didn't I tell you?" he said. "Well, the colonel introduced me to such a first-rate fellow, who was smoking a cigar at his rooms. Mr. Cecil Leader knows him, and so do you, Mrs. Leader," he added, slyly.

"No—not that—Doctor Findlater?" she said, with a sort of horror.

"That Doctor Findlater? He's a very good fellow—filled my case with smuggled cigars, and insisted on us all dining with him—such a dinner as he gave! And there was a parson that sang and made us all die laughing. And then he has a daughter—I beg your pardon, Mrs. Cecil—that's the prettiest, liveliest young girl I ever met. Lord, how we got on!"

The consternation, the stupefied looks at this news, may be conceived! It was a most awkward situation. If Katey had been absent, some attempt at showing him the heinousness of his conduct could have been made. But the young man went on recklessly: "Why don't you have him up here? They are Mrs. C.'s relations, and, as Doctor Fin says, are now your connexions, Mrs. Leader. He says that's the common sense of the thing; that it's like the ostrich sticking its head in the sand, and thinking it's hid all the time. He is the pleasantest, most genial creature, full of stories, and so gentlemanly. Quite a wrong view you gave me, Mrs. Leader. As for the daughter, Miss Polly, I am quite in love with her. She'd be the handsomest girl in London."

Lady Seaman said austerely, "You are talking folly, child. You should recollect that this subject is not very suitable here."

"What nonsense," said the young man, eagerly. "Are not the families connected? Isn't Cecil Leader here Doctor Fin's son-in-law? As the Doctor says, you might as well try and wash the spots off a cat's tail. Oh, how I laughed last night!"

Mrs. Leader was looking a little wildly from one face to the other, murmuring something that was unintelligible, not knowing whether she ought to smile or not. Katey was looking at him with a friendly good-nature which she could not restrain.

"Put such nonsense out of your head," said Lady Seaman. "It is very bad taste of you under the circumstances. Mrs. Cecil Leader knows the footing her father is on with the family, and she must excuse me if I tell you that gentleman is not a person you should know."

"Oh, I have no quarrel with him, mother," said the young lord, carelessly. "And he knows everybody about here."

After breakfast he said he would take a gun and go "potting about the country." It was a bitter, sharp, miserable day, but Miss Jessie and Mr. Leader appeared muffled up, and ready for a walk. He was going to show her their little court, where the magistrates sat, and which she was "dying to see." He was rather sheepish as he announced this plan, and actually blushed.

As he was going out, the voice of Mrs. Leader was heard to call after him sweetly, "I want to speak to you, John dear, in the boudoir a moment."

Her husband made a muttered protest: "Oh, it will do when I come in. What's the use of going now, and keeping Miss Forsythe waiting." But he went, nevertheless.

"Surely you are not mad enough to go out such a day, with your weak chest, making yourself ridiculous, besides, with that girl. Everybody is laughing at you for making such a fool of yourself. You know you are not fit for these young pranks."

"Now don't worry me," said he, fretfully. "You are always worrying me. I can't stay. I promised to go."

"Yes, always after some trifle. And what are we to do with this Findlater, who, remember, I tell you, will try and get hold of this boy for that low girl of his?"

Much put out, Mr. Leader departed, promising to return soon. The foolish little man, unaccustomed all his life to hear words of compliment, or to have his stories listened to, was quite enchanted by the zest exhibited by his new friend.

After they had gone her ladyship graciously signified that she should like a drive. "To be sure, dear Lady Seaman. I will drive you myself." And presently the amazed lady of quality came down to the door to find a dainty little carriage and skittish little ponies, and the engaging charioteress, in a light hat, with a fairy-like parasol-whip, and all the charming characteristics of sweet seventeen. A smile came to her guest's face as she took her seat, and they drove away. How many plans, how much of "laying heads together" took place in that little drive! A perfect hatching of a conspiracy, with low, earnest voices.

They drove into the town, as her ladyship wished to buy a cap "cheap," and Mrs. Leader believed something of the kind could be got at M'Intyre's. As they were driving away out of the town, past one of the little lanes near the Doctor's house, they saw two figures, and Lady Seaman called out:

"Bless me! who on earth is that Seaman is with?"

The figures heard the sound of the wheels, and turned to look. That action revealed our blushing Polly, quite scared, like some tender fawn who has been browsing, lifting nervously her pretty head as she hears the distant barking of the dogs. She made as though she would spring away over the fields, and escape. The young man coloured, then cried out:

"Don't go. It's only my mother."

The carriage was now up to them, and Mrs. Leader had to pull up her ponies.

"Of course you know Mrs. Leader? Mother, this is the young lady at whose father's house I was telling you we had such a jolly night—Miss Polly Leader."

The lady bowed stiffly, and Polly dropped a sort of stage curtesy.

"I thought you had gone out shooting," said his mother, without noticing "the girl." "Here, get up into the back seat, and come home."

"Oh, I can't, indeed. I've an—appointment in the town; and you wouldn't have me leave a nice young lady alone in the fields?"

"Oh, papa is at the band," faltered Polly, really frightened at the two terrible ladies. "I can easily get there."

"Not at all," said he. "I'll go with you." And, in truth, the sound of military music could be heard where they were standing. "I tell you what, why shouldn't you drive round and see it? It's great fun. All the town is there."

At this moment were seen the figures of two gentlemen approaching. How had it happened? Was it that our Doctor had seen from afar off the glittering equipage, and was attracted by it, in the hope of something turning up? Or was it that he had seen "the situation," and what could be made of it? With him was Captain Molyneux.

"I declare here is the Doctor himself," said the young man, in mischievous enjoyment of what was to follow. "He does not know that it is you who are here."

Mrs. Leader knew not what to do; her impulse was to drive on; but she did not want to seem afraid before Lady Seaman.

"Oh, really this is unbearable," said that lady.

"You down here, my dear Lady Seaman?" said the captain, taking off his hat. He knew nearly all the "figure-heads of society," as they might be called. "Ah, Miss Polly, and you here? Nice work this. Your father won't approve of this."

The Doctor made a respectful bow to Mrs. Leader. "Ah, captain, she's thinking of the pleasant evening we had the other night, when his lordship amused us all so much. Eh, Polly pet?"

All this was so much torture for Mrs. Leader, perched up high, in a very awkward position. She was, besides, conscious that the Doctor was gazing, with a sort of scoffing air, at her finery and general costume.

"We need not stay here, dear Lady Seaman," she whispered. "Do let us go."

"Come, Seaman, we'll take you home. I want to speak to you. Really."

"Oh, never mind dressing, my lord, and all that," said the Doctor, eagerly. "We don't stand upon ceremony at our house. Polly will excuse the wedding garment—I mean, of course, always excepting on the grand occasion." And the Doctor and the young lord roared at this joke, while Captain Molyneux smiled.

"Oh, you can't dine out to-day," said his mother; "it's quite rude—not good manners to your host."

"Oh, nonsense," said he, sulkily. "It would be worse ill manners to throw over an engagement. Mrs. Leader has plenty of the family to entertain."

"I am sure I don't want to stand in the way of Lord Seaman's movements," said the Doctor, maliciously, to Mrs. Leader. "Mrs. Leader knows that in my little hospitality is the only opportunity I have of securing the pleasure of his company."

The two ladies had to drive away, frustrated in their schemes. It looked, indeed, as though things were turning out ill for their little plot.

"My dear Mrs. Leader, it is all for yourself," were the last words of the noble lady as they drove up the avenue. "If your husband is indisposed to exert himself, or allows himself to be laughed at by a low fellow like that, why, it is not my affair, but yours. If it were my case I should settle it off-hand, and not listen to any more such nonsense. If my husband were afraid to act for the interest of the family I should take it on myself."

Mrs. Leader, entering the house, allowed these words to sink into her soul, and her compressed lips showed that she had taken a resolution.

CHAPTER XVII. A SKIRMISH.

Over dinner that day there was quite a blank solemnity, owing to the late events, though there ought to have been joy and good spirits, from the invalid's coming down for the first time, and joining the family at dinner. He was greatly changed, with a wild, shifting look in his eyes, and with a singular irritation and fretfulness, which his wife had noticed was growing on him steadily. Mr. Leader and his companion came in late, after a most delightful day and charming expedition; but at dinner no one was in a humour to rally him, as perhaps he wished to be rallied. To him his wife assumed a stern, offended manner, which disturbed him not a little, and to Katey she was specially hostile.

After speaking of their drive, Mrs. Leader said: "But I suppose we shall have to give up driving about the place at all. We cannot be secure an instant from intrusion."

"I think Mrs. Cecil Leader," said the guest with affected respect, "might without difficulty contrive that you should be saved from intrusion of this kind. I am sure her relations would listen to her."

"Are you speaking of my father?" said Katey, coldly. She had heard of the adventure before. "I implore you, madam, to leave that subject alone. It is as painful to me to hear him attacked, as for you to hear him defended."

The servants were out of the room. The hostile ladies looked at one another. Lady Seaman then said:

"You see, Mrs. Leader, there are subjects which we are not to talk of at your own table."

Here Cecil struck in angrily. "Well, it is hard to have her father brought up thus for abuse. They're always nagging at him here. I believe she hates the ground he walks on."

Mrs. Leader looked over at her husband. "You are privileged as an invalid," she said.

"Oh, I want no privilege," he said. "But I think you might let her father alone. He's a good fellow, and liked by every one that knows or meets him. Only there are special reasons in this house for running him down."

Mr. Leader, with both ladies looking to him, now interposed. "Don't say any more, Cecil. You must consult your mother's wishes."

"Mother," said the young man, "no, not quite. There's been very motherly conduct going on about me."

"He wishes us to leave the room. Mr. Leader allows me to be spoken of any way, in my own presence."

Mr. Leader, emboldened perhaps by the wish to make a figure before Miss Forsythe, said:

"I must beg, Cecil, that this will cease. It is very unbecoming of you. I can't have it at my table."

"Then you shouldn't allow our connexions to be abused at your table."

"Cecil, I implore you," faltered Katey.

"Nonsense, they think I've grown stupid and don't know what's going on, or am to keep my mouth shut. It's a shame, so it is. Such plots and schemes, and when I am so ill, too."

"Will you allow this, Mr. Leader?"

"I can't have it, sir. It's most unwarrantable, making such charges; so disrespectful, too. You should not speak so at my table."

"That is a mild rebuke," said Lady Seaman. "I must say, Mr. Leader lets you off very easy, Mr. Cecil."

"Either he or I shall leave the table unless I receive an apology, even before Lady Seaman."

"Apology!" said Katey, excited. "You must be laughing at him. Recollect he has been ill; and is it right or generous to excite him in this way?"

"I'll make no apology to any of them, never fear, Katey," said the young man, rising and pushing back his chair. "I'll not stay here any longer."

He then left. Katey remained for a moment.

"It is not fair," she said, in an imploring voice, "to work on him in this way. Recollect what an illness he has had, and you are taking a serious responsibility."

Mary Leader had remained silent up to this. Perhaps she thought her previous interference only did harm. She felt, too, the scandal of such recrimination in presence of mere strangers, such as the Seamans were, and was inexpressibly hurt at such an exhibition. When Katey left the room she left also.

The ladies looked at each other.

"This is growing too bad," said Mrs. Leader. "You see what Lady Seaman thinks."

"Well, I should prefer not to give an opinion; but if my son treated me in that way, he should not do it twice."

"There!" said Mrs. Leader.

"My dear sir, you see the case is plainly this. I don't blame the young man, but this is evidently their influence. He is hopelessly enslaved to them; they are using him as a lever to harass and annoy you; and depend upon it, in this attack on your wife, he has been prompted, or put up to it. You heard what he said so bitterly about a plot? Depend upon it, this Doctor has put that into his head. This is but the beginning, and I warn you, unless you take some step in self-defence, you will be fostering an enemy in your house."

With these words she rose and broke up the council.

That night there was a second council held between Mr. and Mrs. Leader. Like most weak people, he had suddenly veered round, wishing to win a cheap reputation for decision.

"Oh, I must say this has gone quite too far. He should not insult you at my table. What Lady Seaman said was very true: that Doctor has got two emissaries of his in the house, whom he works on. And I really am bound to take some step to assert my authority."

"You say that," said Mrs. Leader; "but they can treat you as they like. You would let me be insulted again to-morrow."

"Oh, that is quite a different thing. I really cannot be treated as a cipher in my own house. Cecil certainly must apologise to you, or incur my serious displeasure."

"What rubbish you talk! Do you want

every one to be in screams of laughter at you? What good will an apology do me, with that low, impertinent wife of his always in the house, urging him on to insult me? I cannot bear it. I will not stand it. Have you no sense of the respect due to yourself, that you would let creatures of this sort, who have been insolent, who snap their fingers at you, relying, I suppose, on the certainty that after your death everything must come to them, and so they can outrage their step-mother with impunity? Have you no shame before these people, who are doing so much for us? What a contempt they must have for you—you whom they would make a baronet."

Mr. Leader was overwhelmed, and, in truth, not a little ashamed of himself. Perhaps that petty, mean motive influenced him, that his own poor little authority had become enfeebled, and that here was an opportunity of showing that they were all "in the wrong box," and that he still had power in his own house. So he said, "Of course I shall take measures to keep up my own respect and yours. I have no notion of being treated in this fashion."

"That is all very fine talk. What can you do?

"I can at least reserve the power of disposing of my own estate in my own hands. That will be a check on him, and insure that he will behave with respect to you and to us all."

Mrs. Leader said nothing, but that very night went into her boudoir and wrote a letter to Messrs. Amos, the family solicitors, to come down the next day. Even that concession was a great deal, and she flew to Lady Seaman to announce it. Meanwhile eleven, twelve, and one o'clock passed by before the young lord returned.

VERSAILLES AND THE TRIANONS.

All eyes, for some time past, have been directed towards Versailles, the more so that it is a spot familiar to the great majority of excursionists. Few persons not pressed for time visit Paris without going to see Versailles; but not one in a score, perhaps not one in a hundred, of the multitudes who throng to Versailles, ever see the Trianons. Even the park and the parterres around the château are comparatively unknown, except to persons who have gone there on a "grand waters" Sunday.

The reason is plain. The inside of the palace is so interminable, that, before you have "done it," on consulting your watch, you find that it is time to rush back to Paris and dine. Few people dine at Versailles twice; for one reason, amongst others, that the dinners there are sometimes what the French call "très salés," highly salted; that is, dear. The first and last time I dined at Versailles, two peaches at dessert were charged two francs, at the season when they might have been bought for a couple of sous in the streets of Paris. One way of seeing all, at leisure, is to take lodgings in Versailles for a week or a fortnight; but that amounts to an undertaking.

To make sure of the Trianons, the first thing is to ascertain the days on which they are open to visitors. Before the outbreak of the war, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, from twelve till four, were the appointed times. I mention these details because it is impossible that the present state of things should last, and that Paris and its appendages should not be reopened to the civilised world; when that desirable consummation arrives, it will probably be the endeavour of those in power to put things as nearly as possible on their former footing. On this account I beg to remind you that there are two railways from Paris to Versailles, of which the most convenient for strangers is that following the right bank of the Seine, and starting from the station of the Western Railways, Rue Saint Lazare. Trains leave Paris every hour, at the half-hours, from half-past seven in the morning till half-past ten at night. Return trains leave Versailles at the hours. The journey occupies forty-seven minutes. On grand occasions, besides the above, extraordinary and supplementary trains are started. For visitors residing in the hotel region of Paris, the simplest plan is to go to the omnibus office in front of the Bourse, and there take, together, omnibus tickets to the station and railway tickets to Versailles and back. This simple arrangement avoids a great deal of trouble. You will perceive that, by giving these directions, I take it for granted that, after the thunder-cloud has passed away, Paris, Versailles, and other historical spots, will be more run upon than ever.

Say you leave Paris at half-past nine, or even half-past ten, it gives you time to stroll through the listless streets of Versailles—I speak of their usual and week-day aspect—up to the palace, and through the park, to enter the Trianons soon after the opening of their gates. You can take a hack carriage to convey you thither; but

visiting them on foot gives a correcter idea of the vast extent of this suggestive domain, besides allowing time for observation and reflection. A pedestrian could not fail to note that field, producing more scarlet poppies than wheat, which lies between the big and the little palaces. In my blindness, that brilliant June afternoon, I could see in it only bad farming, which was strange so close to a temple dedicated to the glories of France; whereas, second sight should have shown it as an omen of the seas of blood so soon to be spilt.

If you really mean to see the Trianons, on entering the palace gates, you must resolutely turn your back on the miles of galleries and acres of pictures that entice you within. Leave them for a rainy day, if yet unseen; or, if seen, refrain from revisiting them to-day. It is impossible not to recal them in imagination. There is the theatrical chapel, with its tribune, and galleries, and graduated seats of honour, which has recently been desecrated—bigots would say—by the sound of Lutheran hymns, and Lutheran preaching. Nevertheless, I have seen churches in Germany in which Protestant service was celebrated during one half of the day and Catholic service in the other, without any sense of pollution being felt by either set of worshippers. There are the long suites of rooms, where, at this present writing, wounded Prussians gaze from their beds at the pictured triumphs of their adversaries. There are the commemorative saloons, on which Louis Philippe spent large sums of money from his private purse. There is the Council Chamber, a portion of which was once the royal Cabinet des Perruques. Louis the Fourteenth changed his wig several times a day. He had a wig to hear mass in; a wig for after dinner, to help digestion; a wig to hunt in, and a wig to put on after hunting; a wig to sup in, and possibly a wig to sleep in. There was held the council into which Madame Dubarry intruded, seating herself on the arm of Louis the Fifteenth's chair, and where she one day snatched out of the king's hand a packet of still unopened letters and threw them into the fire. There is Louis the Fourteenth's sacred bed-chamber, containing his doubly sacred bed, at the foot of which, when he left Versailles, a valet de chambre slept, to guard the said bed inviolate. The bed is still surrounded by its balustrade, which no one might pass without the king's permission. When the President de Norion approached that bed to talk of state affairs with the ailing king, the Duc d'Aumont, first gentleman of the bedchamber, pulled him back by his robes, and said: "Where are you going? Get out. People like you don't come inside the balustrade, unless the king calls them to speak to him!" In this very chamber, and on this wonderful bed, died Louis the Fourteenth, after a reign of seventy-two years. Everybody knows one ceremonial observed at the death of the kings of France. The first gentleman appeared at a window looking into the Marble Court, and thrice shouted "Le roi est mort!" Then breaking his wand of office, and taking another, he shouted, "Vive le roi!" What followed has been less frequently mentioned. The same functionary fixed the hand of the palace clock on the hour at which the monarch had breathed his last sigh, where it remained motionless until the death of his successor. This custom was observed for Louis the Fifteenth; but after him, out of all the real or titular sovereigns of France, Louis the Sixteenth, Louis the Seventeenth, Napoleon the First, Napoleon the Second, Louis the Eighteenth, Charles the Tenth, and Louis Philippe, the only one who died on the throne was Louis the Eighteenth, and at his death this ceremony was observed for the last time, on the 16th of September, 1824. There is the Salon d'Apollon, formerly the throne-room, in which Louis the Fourteenth received the submission of the Doge of Genoa, who, when asked by the courtiers what he found most extraordinary there, answered "To find myself here." But a similar reply, I think, has been put into some other mouth on some other occasion. There is the former Cabinet of Agates, from one of whose windows Louis the Fifteenth, seeing Madame de Pompadour's funeral pass, made the strange remark, "The marquise has very bad weather for her journey." There is the same wretched monarch's bedroom, in which he died horribly of confluent small-pox. Everybody rushed away, to escape the infection. On leaving the royal chamber, the Duc de Villeguier ordered M. Andouille, the king's head-surgeon, to open the body and embalm it. "Of course I shall," the other replied. "But while I am operating, your office requires you to hold the head." The duke took himself off without saying a word, and the body was neither opened nor embalmed.

There are there heaps of historical records and memorials, almost as many of them false as true. Witness David's cele-

brated picture (of which there are four originals), familiar to the public through engravings, of Bonaparte crossing the Great St. Bernard. The artist preferred to treat this subject poetically rather than as a matter of fact. Napoleon wished to be represented calm, mounted upon a fiery steed. Now he actually crossed the Great St. Bernard on a quiet mule led by a guide.

Versailles, for nearly a century and a half the habitual residence of the French court, dates from Louis the Thirteenth. Fond of hunting in the neighbouring woods, he, or at least his courtiers, got tired of sleeping in a wayside inn or a windmill, and built at first a small pavilion, whose site is still pointed out. Afterwards, he wished for a real habitation, which grew and grew into what it is now. After the first revolution, Versailles ceased to be the abode of kings. The Convention made an inventory of the furniture, and sold it. The Bonapartes never cared much about it. Napoleon the First neglected Versailles, and called it at St. Helena a "ville bâtarde," regretting even the small sums of money which he had spent in keeping up the palace. The vast museum it contains is in great measure the personal work of Louis Philippe.

The Trianons are two miniature palaces or boxes, built as escapes from the heavy grandeur of Versailles, when its royal occupants happened to tire of their dignity. They are Le Grand Trianon and Le Petit Trianon; but at first sight you would say that the big one was the little one, and the little one the big one. The Grand Trianon, with the pride which apes humility, is only a rez-de-chausseé, a ground-floor, while the Petit Trianon has a basement, a first floor, and an attic, all outwardly visible. The delights of both are their gardens and pleasure-grounds.

The two Trianons are to Versailles what Sir Walter Scott's hill cottage was to Abbotsford—a retreat to which he could retire, taking his work with him, and leaving Lady Scott to entertain the blue-bottles in the great house, and who, as Mr. Carlyle said, were really blue. This feeling that the Trianons were refuges of royalty, is manifested by the fact that Charles the Tenth lingered there before his final departure into exile. Louis Philippe, too, after leaving St. Cloud for ever, made a farewell halt at the Trianons. The last sovereign of France probably bade them no adieu, because he expected to revisit them in triumph, and increase their treasures by some new trophy. Man proposes!

Even before Versailles was finished, Louis the Fourteenth had bought some ground in the parish of Triarnum, and built on it, in 1670, a little château, which Saint Simon called "a porcelain house to go and lunch in." A few years afterwards the royal whim chose to convert it into a palace. The building of this palace furnished an instance that wars were then declared with as little reason as they are now. It all arose out of the size of a window.

Louvois, who was then all-powerful, directed the public works, as well as everything else. One day Louis the Fourteenth perceived that one of the windows, still unfinished, was narrower than the others. Louvois, presuming on his influence, bluntly declared that it was not. The king said nothing, and walked away.

A few days afterwards, when they were there together, the king called Le Nôtre, the famous landscape gardener, and ordered him to measure the window. Le Nôtre hesitated, being equally afraid of offending either the king or the minister, who had already come to high words about the matter in dispute. Louis insisted; it turned out he was right; the window was several inches too small; upon which he gave Louvois an awful scolding before the courtiers, the workmen, and the lookers on. Louvois went home in a rage, and told the friends who tried to comfort him, that "he would soon put things to rights, and give the king something else to think about besides bricks and mortar." And he kept his word. He stirred up war by the affair of the double election of Cologne (reminding us of the candidature to the throne of Spain), and aggravated it by carrying fire and sword into the Palatinate.

The inside of the Grand Trianon is interesting, from bearing still fresh the marks of its date. There are the stoves of the period, surviving the girls of the period, who once warmed themselves before them; the thermometer graduated according to Reaumur's scale, before the centigrade had become authoritative; the royal bed enclosed by rails, like an altar, before which devotees might worship. Almost shocking by its incongruity and its contrast is a marble group symbolising France liberating Italy, presented to the Empress Eugénie by the ladies of Milan. Curious are the chaises à porteurs, the sedan-chairs used by Louis the Fifteenth's queen,

Marie Leczinska, and other great and unhappy ladies of that day. A year or two ago, the grand dames of Paris tried to renew the fashion of chaises à porteurs.

Worth inspection is the Salle des Voitures, or coach-house, close by. To enter it you are required to produce an order from some high official. I found a franc to answer the purpose just as well. Here again you have Marie Leczinska's and Marie Antoinette's sedan-chairs, fancy sledges, and amongst them the Dubarry's. Two of the riders in those fine vehicles perishing by the executioner's hands. You have Bonaparte's carriage when he was First Consul, which has not been used since the day when, after her divorce, it carried the Empress Josephine to Malmaison. The day of the dissolution of their marriage he retired to Trianon, while she was sent to Malmaison with a plaster to salve her wounds after the manner of Lord Bateman's rejected bride:

> She came here on a horse and pillion:
> She shall go home in a coach and three.

Charles the Tenth's coronation carriage served for the baptism of the Prince Imperial. We also behold Napoleon the Third's wedding carriage, wonderful on account of its enormous size; it is a house on wheels. What yards upon yards of robes and furbelows its occupants must have worn to fill it out! I forget how many thousand kilos the green-liveried showman told me it weighed. It must have been drawn by horses of two-elephant power. And to think that I had no suspicion that last June afternoon that its owners would so soon be bygones. Not even yet had the Italian joke appeared: "How much will the war cost?" "Due Napoleoni."

The inside of the Little Trianon is not shown, except by special order; but the truth is there is nothing to see in it, unless you take interest in such things as the traces of the trap-door by which the tables at Louis the Fifteenth's petits soupers were sent up into the dining-room, to avoid the compromising attendance of servants. But the grounds are open, charming, and containing some remarkable specimens. I particularly advise you to see a cork-tree which grows behind the orangery. There is also a Swiss village very well done (not flaring, exaggerated, or in tea-garden style), containing houses in which quiet people might make themselves very comfortable, and all by way of a park decoration. Indeed, so well adapted is this pleasure-ground for a place of entertainment, that, in 1797, a Versailles café keeper, named Langlois, hired the Little Trianon to use it as a public garden. He set up a restaurant in it, and gave fêtes with illuminations and fireworks. It was from this garden that Garnerin made his first balloon ascents. The furniture of the Little Trianon had been sold by auction, which accounts for its not being a show-place now.

VILLAGE SCAMPS.

In every village there is the village scamp, as surely as there is the village pump, or the village ale-house. He may be of various kinds, scampishness being multiform in its manifestations, but he is certain as an institution, in what way soever he may present himself, the community not yet being known that has not its black sheep among its white ones.

The village scamp of one kind is the cleverest man in it—a man who can turn his hand to anything, and who consequently turns it to nothing for any length of time, or to any stability of profit. He lives by anything rather than by steady work, though sometimes, when a virtuous fit is on him, and he is not "out on the rampage," the "loose," or the "spree," as the vernacular of the place may have it, he will undertake a delicate job for the parson or the squire, and "do it as well," says his employer, enthusiastically, "as any man in London could." This kind of scamp is a mechanical genius born, if only poorly bred, a man who has educated his hands up to the highest point of deftness of which he is capable, and who has grafted half a dozen finer branches of his business on to the original rough, poor root. Perhaps he is a toolmaker who has taught himself all about clocks and watches; perhaps he is a watchmaker who has got to learn the principles of the microscope and the spectroscope, and who has improvements of his own on each—not carried out; perhaps he is a carpenter, or only a vulgar joiner, self-erected into a clever cabinet-maker, a delicate machinist, a clear and vigorous wood-carver; whatever he is by trade he is sure to be more by capability, and he is also sure to have, beside his manual skill, a natural aptitude for geometry. He can also do anything whatsoever that wants nice manipulation, clever adaptation, and a dash of original genius; and, with his almost intuitive perception of figures and dyna-

mics, not only understands his employer's most intricate plans, but adds improvised ideas of his own. "The best workman I ever had," says his first master, shaking his head. "Lord bless ye, he could do anything he were put to; but the drink took him, and now where is he?"

Where, indeed! In the ale-house, or the skittle-ground, idling about with his hands in his pockets, dirty, ragged, unkempt, and penniless; with faculties that would have insured him a competency and an honourable position, if not an absolute fortune, if he would have used them, through "the drink" and idleness together going straight to the dogs and the workhouse. His parson alternately rates and encourages him, according as the bad fit or the good is on him; the master employer of his special trade tries him again and again, and is always glad to give him a job when he will take it; but the ale-house and the skittle-ground, idleness and loafing, are stronger temptations than work and honesty, respectability and comfort. They are the nets into which his shuffling ill-shod feet have strayed, and from which they will never clear themselves again; and he lives and dies as the notorious scamp of the village, if also its best hand and its cleverest head.

Twin brother to him is the intellectual scamp, the self-taught smatterer of first principles, the dabbler in science, whose forte is pedantry and whose foible is universality. He is generally a man of a venerable not to say touching appearance; with a fine head and a good-looking face; plausible, glib, well bred for his position, though perhaps a little too unctuous when not too familiar; a crafty beggar and a successful one, getting what he wants without seeming to ask for it, and so cleverly insinuating his desires, so delicately suggesting his needs, that you take credit to yourself for your keenness of perception in discerning them, not to speak of your generosity in supplying them. He is a man who cannot do much with his hands, which are, as a rule, fine and delicate, and more like the hands of a London pickpocket than the hands of a country workman; but, en revanche, his trade is in his head. "He knows a vast," the neighbours say, with pride in their intellectual ne'er-do-well; "he knows a'most everything." That is, he knows a few fine words, and as much science as an ordinary schoolboy of sixteen; and he makes the little that he does know go a great way, and do quite an heroic amount of service. He is specially grand in his terms, if not always correct, and scorns the vulgar names for things, if he can in any way compass the technical. He talks of the "axes of certain strata," and when he speaks of a "parallelopiped"—which, however, is a white elephant he does not seem quite comfortable with—he looks at you from under his shaggy eyebrows to see how you take it, and in expectation of your admiring surprise at his range of learning. He tells you to find out the state of the tide by "adding four and a half to the moon's south;" and he makes a hazy demonstration of the law by which you, being short-sighted, need concave lenses, and he, being aged and flat-eyed, needs convex ones. But if you care to push him closely you will find his science to be about as substantial as those gossamer webs which lie on the autumn grass, a transparent veneer which will not bear handling. If you get him out of the groove he has made for himself and travelled in for all these years with so much local credit and self-contentment, he is done for, and his learning has evaporated like smoke. Still, he has just the outsides of things, and "in the kingdom of the blind the one-eyed is king."

The scientific scamp, like all other clever scamps, has been a man of many fortunes, and has undergone an immense amount of undeserved misfortune: if he is to be believed. He has filled various posts in his time, and, according to his own account, has been wrongfully dismissed from all. If he is a seaside scamp, he has been in the coast-guard service, but he has no pension; if in a mining district, he has been agent, overseer, paymaster: but he lost that through envy, treachery—anything you like rather than defective arithmetic in the matter of receipts and payments; if in an agricultural district, he was my lord's bailiff, surveyor, steward: but here again evil tongues came in between him and his prosperity, and he was obliged to give up his service, all along of some nameless fellow's lies and wickedness. But he bears no malice, not he; for though my lord smiles with good-humoured reprobation, or frowns with angry reminiscence, as it may chance, when he speaks of him as "that clever old scamp who ought to be now in jail if he had his deserts," the scamp speaks of my lord with quite touching affection; and the lofty magnanimity with which he forgives that unjust dismissal of his, and owns that "my lord is a good

man at bottom, though he is easy to be led," is really heroic. Meanwhile, he lives from hand to mouth, no one knows how, though he will be sure to tell you in your first conversation with him that, but for just the smallest little accident in the world, he would have been a rich man by now, and owner of such and such a valuable property hard by. He is almost always the heir to something or some one, if all people had their dues; and though he is but a poor man, as you see, and glad to drink your health in a pot of beer, if you will give him sixpence to buy it with, he is a gentleman by rights, and you can take his word for it. He affects extreme disdain for the class among which he lives, but you find him night after night drinking with the lowest boor of them all, if only he may drink at his expense; and he will let the poorest day-labourer in the place stand treat for him. The more ignorant of the villagers sit at his feet as a second Gamaliel, and nothing pleases him more than to lay down the law among them, and receive their homage of belief. He makes their wills for them, and writes their letters, whereby he picks up a few pence from time to time. He is "good company," they say, and for the most part debonair and obliging; but in his heart is a well of bitterness that every now and then bubbles up to the surface and expresses itself in speech and look; and he lets you see how inwardly he hates both his life and humanity, despising the clods to whom he feels so immeasurably superior, yet to whose level he has sunk himself, and envying the class to which he cannot attain. His family is the worst educated and worst conducted of the place; his wife the greatest slattern, his house the most sordid and ill-found; and the man who perhaps has been a schoolmaster among his various avocations, who can quote Latin and prove a simple equation, has not taught his own children to read or write, or fitted them for anything but the rudest manual labour. And even in this they see no example in him from which to take a copy. A grain of honesty mixed up with this man's cleverness would have changed the whole current of his life; but just as idleness ruined the clever mechanic, so want of principle and want of honesty has ruined him.

Then there is the scamp of the more conventional kind, the village poacher par excellence, a man of great physical strength, of energy, and daring, and lawlessnesss; a man not bad at heart, and who would have done well in some rough Border state, say, where he would have been in harmony with the conditions; but whose energy here, coupled with his love for hares and pheasants, gets him into continual trouble with the authorities. He may have a dash of something better in him, if it only had the chance to come out; or he may be an unmitigated ruffian, who poaches on the squire's preserves as being an easier way of getting food than by work. But if the first, he is generally a good practical naturalist, and the fidus Achates of all the growing boys of the place. He knows everything they want to learn, and he is never grudging of his knowledge. He shows them where the water-hen has her nest, how to draw a badger, where to look for the otter up the stream, and what are the best flies for the month; he can imitate most of the cries, and his owl's hoot is perfect; he is a good mole-catcher; rats are his playthings and his dog's; he is the best earth-stopper in the neighbourhood, and fish come to his hook when no one else can get a bite. As he is too independent on the one hand, and too fond of the public-house on the other, to be made gamekeeper—which is the only conventionally respectable post he could fill, on the old principle of drafting smugglers into the preventive service—he devotes his whole energies to poaching, as the trade most in harmony with his nature; and it is more by good luck than merit if he does not, some dark night, add the winging of a gamekeeper to his list of shots "straight from the shoulder." If he be a mere ruffian, as may well be, he is almost sure to do something desperate before the game is played out: but if there be any better stuff in him than mere ruffianism, if his faults come rather from the misfitting of circumstance than from original moral obliquity, he may be made something of before he dies. If caught young he makes a good soldier, though constitutionally inclined to insubordination, and often in the cells for drunkenness; or if he have the good fortune to find his way to America or the colonies, he is by no means a bad "pioneer of civilisation," though it must be confessed that the civilisation he carries with him is somewhat of the roughest, and requires nice discrimination to distinguish it from savagery. Kept at home in a small country village, he is the nuisance of the neighbourhood, the demoraliser of the young, and the despair of the local bench; eminently "matter in the wrong place," and, as such, offensive to the nostrils of clean, well-shaven

respectability. But he might have been better done by, if government and social politics had been wise enough to understand the nature of the living material they manipulate.

Besides these, there is the village Lothario, who passes his time in sweetheartings, and to keep company with whom is as much as an honest girl's character is worth: often a reddish-haired, mean-looking fellow, who makes one wonder what the women see to like in him; and there is the mere scamp who is nothing but a scamp, and who, if he had been in London, would have been a thief by profession; and the stupid scamp, the sottish fellow who can do nothing that requires either brains or nicety of handling, but who works only at low and repulsive day-labour when he works at all, which is seldom—the man who is more an animal than a man in nature, in condition just between pauper and criminal, and sure to end in one or the other, and horribly ignorant and poor—a man who is the dread of the guardians, the bête noire of the magistrates, and the opprobrium of our civilisation altogether. And there is the village wit, who sings a good song, has the reputation of being a "fine dancer," who makes verses and says smart things good enough to laugh at, has an admirable temper, "is no one's enemy but his own," and is the life of every convivial meeting. His shoulders are broad; and they need be; for there is not a bit of mischief, not a "lark" in the district of which he is not assumed to be the author and mainspring. When the whole village saw "He is not dead but sleepeth" scrawled over the shutters of one of their tradesfolk notorious for his sloth and late hours of opening, there was no question as to whose handiwork that was; and when he cajoled a foolish woman with more money than sense to marry him on the strength of his fine estate, "in Spain," his neighbours applauded him for a bit of sharp practice that put a few hundreds into his pocket for a time—only for a time; "nobody's enemy but his own," having the faculty of getting rid of money as quickly as water runs through sand. They pitied the poor woman, perhaps; but caveat emptor applies to matrimony as well as to sales, and folks ought to look out when they make bargains, and test their crockery before they buy it. When of the worst sort of his kind, this manner of scamp is close on the heels of the swindler. In fact, he is often substantially a swindler, by his extraordinary fondness for passing himself off as a gentleman when away from home. As one we know of, an honest gardener's clever but slippery son, who ran off with a pretty girl, superior to himself in station, and by dint of boundless audacity succeeded in making an impression on a certain innkeeper—in Yorkshire, too!—for the sorrowful proof, when too late, that pleasant manners do not pay for beef and mutton, and that "Honourables," who speak with a provincial accent, are more loss than profit so far as the bar and the best parlour go.

Then there is the pious scamp, whose faults the parson alone does not see; who sings psalms with unction, helps in keeping the choir up to the mark, goes to church regularly and busies himself with showing strangers into vacant pews, holds the plate at the door, and finally adopts the office of clerk, or is formally installed into it, as the ecclesiastical arrangements of the district may decide. It is a mystery to all how he makes his miserable little business, at which he never seems to work, pay so well as it must, especially with his numerous family to keep, and with but a poor sickly, down-trodden-looking wife to help. And many a sharp thing is said of him and the pot of gold he has found under the rainbow. But he wisely remembers that hard words break no bones, and that those have most cause to laugh who win. He has got the length of the parson's foot, say the neighbours, jeeringly; and having that measure in his pocket, he lets them jeer. He is useful up at the parsonage, where he is a kind of local jackal in the matter of parochial information; for he knows every one's history, and every one's business, and he is not backward in telling what he knows. And then he is a pleasant fellow to talk to, always respectful in his manners and respectable in his appearance, knowing the worth of a clothes-brush, and religious in his use of soap and water—qualities and practices not to be despised in the man to whom a gentleman gives his countenance. Besides, whatever may be suspected of him, nothing is known; for he has the art of washing his dirty linen at home, and of covering ugly places with a plaster not easily seen through. When his daughter goes wrong, and his son gets into trouble, and his own tamperings with morality and the Ten Commandments are oozing out, he keeps a dead silence to the world, and maybe, by his discretion, tides over the evil for a time. Only for a time in all probability; for sooner or later he trips so

that he cannot recover himself; and his true character comes out before that friendly tombstone, which covers so many sins and makes them look like virtues, settles down on him for ever. But the art with which he has made his scampishness look like respectability for so many years, almost deserves a better fate; and if success would have transformed him into an honest man eventually, one would have wished him success. But it would not. It would only have been a premium on his hypocrisy, and in all probability would have converted a plausible scamp, who had everything to gain by appearing what he was not, into a cunning rascal who had everything to lose by showing what he was.

TWO POINTS OF VIEW.

I.

The woodmen were toiling with axe and wedge,
Between the fir-tree rows,
The midges were dancing, dancing, dancing,
Until the evening's close.

Said the gnat that led the waltzers there,
"Look at those foolish men!
They work while we take our pleasure,
Let's go on dancing, then."

II.

The picnic over, the dance went round,
The bugle blew clear and the fiddle began;
Quoth the ant to her train of workmen small,
"Industry see is unknown to man."

"We'll hoard our pile of hard-earned corn,
Then we shall be rich when they are poor;
If summer's the time for them to waste,
Summer's the time for us to store."

HOLBORN RACES.

A FEW numbers back a view was given of a more primitive and innocent stage of horse-racing, as it obtains in a comparatively savage quarter of the sister isle; where it is pursued for the honest and healthy love of horse-flesh, and horse-spirit exhibited in generous rivalry.* It must be owned that this almost Adamite state of innocence was dwelt on invidiously, and with an uncomplimentary reference to other parts of the kingdom, of higher pretence, but corrupt and degraded. It seems now that in thus severely glancing at the favourite sport of the English nation, there was a certain hastiness and unfairness. A too great ardour on the side of right often misleads, and on that occasion the present writer was carried away too far.

The truth is, the great English pastime is comparatively harmless and innocent. I am now inclined to believe that these stories of wreck and ruin—even that reckless gambling known as "plunging,"—are sheer inventions. These things are delusions, possibly bugbears, devised by nervous parents. A convincing proof of this theory is to be found at THE HOLBORN —or 'OLBORN—THEATRE, for both titles prevail. A splendid steeple-chase takes place at that Temple of Momus every night, attended by enormous and excited crowds, whose delight and enjoyment cannot be restrained within bounds. I can see that this hearty relish is based upon recognition and recollection: the reproduction is so amazingly accurate, that the stirring chord is touched, which has so often responded in the case of cabs, conflagrations, railway stations, and the like. There is a spontaneousness in the greeting, which proves that a familiar friend is recognised. Thus the truth of the Shakespearean "holding up the mirror to nature," is once more triumphantly vindicated. Horses, or more appropriately 'orses, and jockeys, are clearly nature, and therefore proper to be reflected from the stage, even in such a dull and wavy sheet of glass as the 'Olborn. The most loyal admirer of the drama now running must admit that nearly the whole attraction centres in the steeple-chase. That contest will bring "nightly thousands" to the house, and thousands of a yet more desirable kind to the treasury. But its most glorious homage comes from the side of morals; for, as before remarked, it vindicates British horse-racing triumphantly.

The story itself, whose natural interest, as we have intimated, quite pales beside the "Race," shows how "young Tom Shutte" had got into bad company, and into the possession of "a forged bill," now nearly due. He is, however, the owner of a great steeple-chaser, Jack-in-the-Box, who is "favourite" for the Canterbury military race, and is to be ridden by his owner. A villanous friend has laid heavily against the horse, and will be ruined if he win, and is thus obliged to devise an infamous scheme for having the owner of Jack-in-the-Box arrested. Mark the diabolical ingenuity of this ruse! On this ungentlemanly and cruel arrest of the rider, the horse, of course, cannot start, all the available riding talent of the regiment being already provided with "mounts."

The scene on the course at Canterbury, under such circumstances, was interesting, in the highest degree, as may well be

* See ALL THE YEAR ROUND, New Series, vol. iv., p. 465.

imagined. Quite a flutter ran round the vast multitude as we saw "the saddling-room" —to the very reality, as we may presume —with an excited throng of some five-and-twenty people, circulating in a highly artificial manner, no doubt assumed to keep down that nervous flutter which always comes on before a race. It was strange to see how nicely representative were the elements of this throng, there being two soldiers, two policemen, two or three countrymen, two or three betting-men, with a Punch-and-Judy artist, an acrobat, and other recognised constituents of a race-course crowd. A better behaved crowd we are bound in honour to admit could not have been produced in all England; and even their betting seemed not to travel beyond the harmless limits of a few half-crowns. One objection, indeed, we might offer as to the words "the weighing-room" being an accurate description of the scene, as all that was visible in reference to weighing was that title inscribed over a doorway O. P., which appeared to be formed of canvas, according to the custom on race-courses.

But the saddling-bell has rung—a bell which, at the conclusion of the race, seemed to have been disposed of as door-bell to a private house in the farce that followed—and already we hear the restless hoofs of thorough-breds, sounding hollowly on what seems to be the wooden floor of an adjoining apartment. Three jockeys cross the stage with saddles on their arms; and after them, led by grooms, defile three racers, one of whom is "the crack," Jack-in-the-Box. I simply state here that I believe the stories about this noble animal's viciousness to be the grossest libels, especially the story told by his groom of his having kicked a boy rider in the stomach that very morning, an injury likely to terminate fatally. A quieter, better behaved animal could not be desired; and the very fact that with all his drawbacks of figure and breeding he should have established himself as first favourite, is sufficient testimony to his gifts. I should not have liked to have hinted such doubts in that vast assemblage, so much under the dominion of prejudice, and who were, moreover, bound to express their partiality from having put their money on him, even in a figurative sense, at the doors; but, even to unprofessional eyes, it was plain that he and his two companions were more in the "draught" line, and though, of course, "bred," as all living horses must be in some shape, still the claim of "thorough" breeding seemed to go a little too far. In the intervals of training it was more than probable that they earned their corn by honest toil. There is no disparagement meant in this, and it seems to me rather to add to what might be called their kudos.

Just before the race began, a little incident occurred of more than usually dramatic sort. The unprincipled adventurer having succeeded in his schemes, had announced to the bewildered crowd, publicly, that the favourite was not to start, adding, it seems to us, with a superfluous mendacity, a strong reflection on the honour of the owner, stating, in so many words, that he had sold the race. But a young lady, who seemed to come from the stand-house, here stepped forward, and made a spirited speech in reply, defending the absent, and, to the cheers of the mob, maintained that the horse would run. This statement was uncourteously contradicted by the unprincipled man, and as vehemently supported by the young lady, in whom the absence of any false modesty on such an occasion could not be too much commended. It was a most striking instance of nicely timed corroboration that, on being required to make good her words, she had only to point to the saddling-room, which opened as if by telegraphic agency or machinery, and out of which emerged a new rider—the gallant young Mr. Jessamy, a mere boy, who had never ridden a race in his life, but who, being in love, would do anything to please the young lady. Was there ever such a Deus ex machinâ?

The course appears to have been laid out with great judgment. We see over the fair champaign country, technically called "stiff." And certainly if our steeds, after the day's severe traction over the rude causeways of the metropolis, can "stay" over such a course, we must, of course, retract what has been said in reference to their pedigree. At a distance there appear to be formidable jumps; but here, at home, there is an elaborate leap of a curiously involved and artificial character: a sort of entry between two canvas banks (O. P.) blazing with jets of gas on the ground, which seems to us a meaningless increase of the risks of steeple-chasing, and which entry is barred by a canvas hurdle. I have no doubt that this ingenious combination of difficulties was arranged by the committee of officers who laid out the course. But still the canvas hurdle was no more than a foot high; and there

seemed to be some few twigs and leaves tacked on to hide the unfamiliar canvas from the equine eye. There are plenty of artful sportsmen who are very clever at devising breakneck jumps; but I doubt if this clever but risky idea of a row of gas jets under the furze has occurred to the most enterprising clerk of the course.

It might have been a mere coincidence, but it was very strange to discover, on adjourning to this fresh portion of the course, that the whole of the crowd we had seen before had adjourned with us! There was not one more, or less; the two soldiers, the two policemen, the two betting men; we recognised all their features. This constant companionship gives a pleasant feeling; we know we are not strangers to one another, and there is a corresponding sympathy. But we have no time for these nice speculations, for the cry rises, "They are off!" Off, indeed; as we could see about six feet from the ground afar off, of course in strict obedience to the laws of perspective, where a string of horsemen, neatly cut out in pasteboard, seemed to be propelled along a slit by some hand moving unseen behind. But how is this? Only three horses were led up and down, and only three riders certainly went in to weigh. These three have multiplied, à la Falstaff, into half a dozen horses of buckram, or what seems to be buckram, or of pasteboard. And turning to our racing-card, or playbill, we see eight horses and riders set down. This shows a want of concert between the histrionic Dorling and the military committee.

But indeed this wonderful race is overflowing with exceptions. Our vulgar ideas of a course were, that it took a shape something approaching the circular or an oval. But one is puzzled by the novelty of the present attempt. For when next our horses are seen, they cross the scene by a slit lower down (ergo nearer to us) and moving in the same direction, still westward ho! Now as we have not moved from the imaginary stand-house where we took up our position, the only theory for the shape of the course is, that it copies the flourish of Corporal Trim's stick, of which a cut is given in Tristram Shandy; that is, the riders are coming closer and closer to us, by taking a series of eccentric rings much like the flourishes of the ladies' curl known as a "follow-me-lad." We have not time to follow this speculation, for by the shouting and the looking out towards the wing we know they are coming round the stage Tattenham Corner, which lies somewhere towards the prompter's box. The relays of horses, graduated in size according to the distance, have done their work, and from hearing the sound of struggling hoofs upon boards, with which the course has been most unsuitably laid down at this critical point, we know that the final struggle is at hand. Oh! what shouting and waving of arms, as here trots in leisurely the favourite, ambles quietly up to the great jump, leisurely clears the canvas hurdle, gas and all, and wins!

The second horse walks up in the same contented manner, and stops short at the jump; while to our amazement we see the rider deliberately let himself down over his animal's shoulders. This was a heavy "cropper," we are informed. Away with in future the vile slanders about "Fordham calling on the mare," or "Holman fairly ripping up "the Doctor's sides," or a "severe struggle at the finish," when both animals were much distressed. These are, so to speak, and without any disrespect to female old age, mere old women's stories. Here, with our own eyes, we saw how a great and severely contested race could be finished with perfect humanity and gentleness, and how each horse could literally have it "all his own way." So, too, with those bugbears of loss of life. Surely when a jockey pulls up his horse at a fence, and then glides down over that horse's shoulder, on to what seems a blanket, no doubt accidentally dropped there by a spectator absorbed in the race, such vulgar charges, repeated over and over again by the enemies of steeple-chasing, are refuted in the most triumphant manner. Finally, at the close, the 'Olborn introduced a novel but not unpicturesque feature, the grouping the three horses with their faces to us, their riders on their backs, and each horse's head held securely by two grooms in full dress, the police, soldiers, and crowd forming a background. This might be intended as a sort of graceful apotheosis, and was certainly effective.

The purport of these remarks has been to vindicate a peculiar British sport from undeserved obloquy. Here we may see racing pure and undefiled, and purged from the hackneyed stories with which enemies and slanderers are too fond of disfiguring it. If any one doubts the accuracy of this description, let him go and see for himself, and send his sons without fear to the great Isthmian games of his native country. It may be objected, on the other hand, that this is not a faithful representation. But

then its rapturous reception and recognition, as a faithful picture, by the "nightly thousands," place its accuracy beyond dispute.

SIX MONTHS IN THE EAST.

AT JERUSALEM.

Lipman Woolf is a proselyte and a guide. He is spiritually our superior, and socially our servant, and his manner blends the two conditions very curiously. The six pounds a day we have contracted to pay our Jaffa dragoman, Alee Sulyman, entitles us to be provided with competent local guides, and Lipman, who is a German Jew by birth, and a Jerusalem Christian by conversion, is told off to attend to us during our sojourn in the Holy City. He is a well-informed, intelligent man, and by no means devoid of earthly cunning. When, for example, he found that the stock phrases of a certain school of religionists fell flatly upon our ears, he assumed a jaunty tone, and touched on the most sacred matters with a familiarity which was at once sneaking and profane. It was as if he said: "I sin vicariously, and as a matter of business. These four Englishmen are not touched when I refer to my own spiritual experiences, and seem to resent my abusing or mocking at infidels and Jews. It is clear, therefore, that they are unregenerate, and do not appreciate the privilege of associating with interesting converts. The story of my inner life has no charm for them. They are worldly enough to prefer historical or topographical information to that relation of my own spiritual backsliding and ultimate repentance, which is so deservedly a favourite with the right-minded and the good, and I must, therefore, under protest, and at a moral sacrifice which I trust will be remembered when we settle accounts, affect the jocularity I believe to be germane to their fallen natures." Reprimanded with some sternness for presuming to speak flippantly to a venerable rabbi at the Jews' Wailing-Place, and for unseemly talk, Lipman saw his mistake, and settled down into a useful guide, who was willing to do our bidding without obtruding advice, and to answer our questions without volunteering opinions as to the ultimate destiny of unbelievers. He was not a prepossessing companion, even after exercising this self-denial, and in all his descriptions of the apocryphal sites of Jerusalem, seemed to calculate how much we were willing to swallow, and to season his discourse accordingly. The man's whole bearing seemed to speak of emoluments or privileges gained by the profession of religion, and set us speculating upon the direct and indirect advantages to be gained by an "interesting convert" who makes modern Jerusalem his dwelling-place. A slouching, waddling gait, large flat feet, which shuffle one after the other, as if in the acts severally of evasion and stealthy search, shoulders rounded by a frequent succession of lazy attitudes, hands and arms which hang listlessly at his side, as if protesting against being employed, a convex figure, which told its own story of good living, and a seedy black frock-coat, a striped waistcoat, baggy trousers, and a wide-awake cap, none of which would have been inappropriate in Holywell-street or Houndsditch, made up the figure introduced to us by Alee as "Mistre Woolf, good guide for Jerusalem." In Lipman, too, we had the spongy nose, the juicy lip, the keen, expressive eye, the pendulous cheek, the dark curly hair, the full chin, and the greasy complexion to be seen among one type of Israelites at home; and as we started for our first ramble through the city, it was with a curious feeling as to our companion's identity with the conventional Jew, as drawn in Punch.

Mr. Disraeli makes one of Tancred's companions direct him to Bethany as unconcernedly as if "he were showing the way to Kensington," and the author of Eöthen describes the strange effect upon the mind of discovering Mount Calvary to be "on the first floor" of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. But nothing short of a visit to Jerusalem can bring the strange conjunctions to be met there thoroughly home, and when Lipman asks us to excuse him for "a quarter of an hour, that he may go up to Zion with a small parcel," and assures us we "shall be able to walk round by Brook Kedron and the Valley of Jehoshaphat to Gethsemane and the Mount of Olives, from the top of which he will show us Moab, the Valley of the Jordan, and the Dead Sea, and to be back at the hotel in time for the six o'clock table d'hôte," the announcement almost takes away our breath.

We start in regular order soon afterwards, the proselyte leading: and after limping over the sharp stones which form the pavement of the foul and narrow streets of Jerusalem, and passing through some of her fœtid covered ways, find ourselves outside the city, and are soon

scrambling down a steep pathway encircling its walls. Lipman talks all the way in snuffling tones, pouring out a flood of traditions, and eyeing us curiously after delivering himself of each. He is very severe upon the Jews. They are the idlest, the most ignorant, and the most untrustworthy of the natives of Jerusalem. They live upon charity most of them, and are abject and superstitious. On Friday afternoon Lipman will take us to their Wailing-Place, where we shall laugh to see them crying over what they say are the walls of their Temple, and praying that the ancient grandeurs of the chosen people may be restored. It is quite funny, Lipman thinks, to see tottering old men with white hair, women who are grandmothers, accompanied by their kinsmen and kinswomen of all ages, deceiving themselves in this way, sometimes putting a written petition to Jehovah in the open crevices of the old wall, "which I've taken away myself at night, and sold as curiosities to English gentlemen, when the poor people thought an angel from heaven had taken it;" and then to think of his, Lipman's, ever having belonged to such an unenlightened set! Would we buy one of the petitions he speaks of to take away as a relic? He has no doubt he could find one after next Friday, and then, his quick instinct and habit of sly watchfulness enabling him to read in our faces the disgust and indignation we felt, he suavely changed the theme, and showed us that we were already in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, with the tomb of Absalom, of Zacharias, and of St. James in front of us, and thousands upon thousands of rude graves on the mountain-side to our right. We know, both from reading and from external evidence, that the monolith surmounted by a pyramid, and ornamented by an Egyptian cornice and Doric frieze, cannot be the pillar which Absalom "reared up for himself during his lifetime," but we follow the immemorial custom of the Jews, and cast stones into the tomb to mark our reprobation of the rebellious and unfilial conduct of him whose name it bears. The day is hot, and honest Lipman is a laggard when we come to scale the hill, and his generally "unbuttoned" and untidy look increases. We are on Olivet now, and Jerusalem is before us in clearly cut outline—a raised picture on a bright blue wall of sky. We have passed Gethsemane — a small walled-in garden, with some very ancient olive-trees and formal modern flower-beds, guarded by a holy father, who unlocks the garden-door to strangers, and sells flowers, and points out delves in the rock which mark where the apostles were found sleeping by our Lord, and accepts backsheesh, all in the spirit and with the manner of the janitors of show-places all over the world. There was not a touch of reverence, not a spark of feeling in his talk. It was all hard, dry, business-like, and commonplace, and we turn our backs on Gethsemane, and continue our walk up the Mount of Olives with a bitter feeling that the ground we tread on at least is real, and that it is only in the natural topography of the Holy Land that we shall be safe from imposture and the craft and subtlety of man. There is little atmospheric haze in Palestine—all is bright and clear, and the perspective in landscape is not well brought out in consequence. But this, which has been complained of as an artistic defect, is a wonderful aid to strangers who are striving to master its localities.

When we have gained the summit of Olivet, Lipman perspiring painfully, and with his glib utterances interrupted by grunts and groans, not from its steepness, but by reason of our rapid pace, we put him under close cross-examination, and request him to limit his conversation to replies. Where we are, on the summit of Olivet, is just half a mile from Jerusalem, as the crow flies, and some two hundred and twenty feet above it, and with nothing to intercept the view. Acting on the advice given in Murray's admirable and copious handbook, we ascend the little minaret of the village of Tur, which crowns the mount, and from it drink in impressions which will be life-long. Looking down the mountain's sloping sides and past the olive-trees dotting them, is the dried-up bed of Brook Kedron; while the ridge of Zion; the ravine of Hinnom; the Mosque of Omar, with the beautiful enclosure of the Harem; the so-called fortress of Antonia; the Golden Gate, walled up to prevent the fulfilment of the Moslem prophecy that Jerusalem shall be retaken by an infidel invader, who will enter by it; the dome and heavy square tower of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre; Akra, which is now the Christian quarter—the English church looking fresh and new, by contrast with the buildings near; the Jewish quarter on the steep face of the hill of Zion; the white dome and minaret of the tomb of King David: are all in view. Looking to the south of the valley of Hinnom, Lipman points out the Hill of Evil Counsel, the ruins on which, as the Jews insist, are those

of the villa or country house of Caiaphas, the high priest; while to the north the high tower of Neby Samwîl, the ancient Mizpah, alone breaks the lines of undulating hills. All these were included in our first view from the top of Olivet. Passing along one of the narrow paths of Tur, and followed by the large-eyed ragged children of the village, and gazed at shyly by half-veiled maidens, who wore immense necklets and head-dresses of silver coins, in one of which a five-shilling piece of our own William the Fourth held the central or honoured place, and we turn our backs on Jerusalem, and looking eastwards see Moab and the shining waters of the Sea of Death. We are now on the opposite brow of the mount to where we stood last, and in the far distance, extending to the north and south as far as eye can reach, is a huge wall of dull red mountains, destitute of vegetation, and with their rugged watercourses and harshly scored sides defined with wondrous clearness in the evening sun. They are the mountains of Moab, and between us and them, and shelving down from our feet for ten miles in a succession of bare hills and sandy desolate valleys, is the Wilderness of Judæa. Beyond this lies the plain of the Jordan, with the course of the river and its junction with the brilliantly blue Dead Sea, marked out by the dark green foliage on its banks. We were told subsequently that we were especially fortunate in the weather, on this our first experience of this most impressive view, and that it not unfrequently happens that the traveller has to ascend Olivet many times before he is successful in insuring the glowing grandeur we revelled in. There was not much talk as we descended, and made our way through St. Stephen's Gate to the hotel again. We were as men who had seen almost too much. The profusion of ancient sites, and of the names sacred from earliest infancy, taxes the mental digestion to the uttermost, and we were eager to refer to our Bibles—the best of all guides to Palestine, and to which all others are subsidiary—and to ponder quietly over the stirring sights of the day.

There is a bookseller's shop in Jerusalem, the back window of which looks upon the dried-up Pool of Bathsheba, in which tradition says the fair wife of the unfortunate Uriah was seen bathing by King David from his castle-tower hard by. We purchased at this shop Murray's Guide, in two volumes, and Dean Stanley's Syria and Palestine. With these and our Bibles, together with Miss Martineau's wonderfully minute and graphic record of her travels in the Holy Land, we were almost independent of Lipman, and were, in fact, frequently able to put that worthy right. It is difficult to imagine a purer pleasure than that derived from reading again, on the spot, the sacred story, and then comparing your own feelings and reflections with those of the illustrious travellers who have been before you. After each exploration of Jerusalem and its neighbourhood, it was our rule to retire to our rooms, and there, over books, and maps, and journals, to work out the experience we had acquired. We did this resolutely day by day, and were thus withdrawn to a considerable extent from our fellow-guests at the hotel.

This was an advantage, for what we saw of them at meal-times did not inspire us with a desire to improve the acquaintance. A Jerusalem table d'hôte is of the earth, earthy. In dishes, serving, and appointments, it is as that of the second-rate inn of a second-rate French town. There is nothing offensive, and nothing specially unpalatable in the repast, and the orthodox routine of soups, entrées, joints, poultry, or pigeons, with a wine-list to select from, and bottled Bass at command, is served by civil waiters, who speak English. It is only the company, and its cackle, which jars a little upon nerves which are highly strung. A gentleman, with the mournful look of a man waiting for remittances, takes the head of the table, in virtue of his being the senior guest present, and favours all near him with a flood of washy talk on subjects which we know all about, or can read up in our guide-books. He is a tall thin man with a lined face, wrinkled caverns under his eyes, and a solemnly pompous manner; insisting much upon the recondite knowledge he has acquired during a ten months' stay in Jerusalem, and on the impossibility of mere birds of passage, such as the majority of the people present, taking any interesting information away. By a beautiful compensation, no human being is so constituted as to be deprived of self-esteem, and to this gentleman it is given to pride himself upon having remained for a certain number of months in one place, and to have, if his conversation be any criterion, learnt, thought, and understood as much as a milestone would in the same time. The American family, who have been travelling for the last year, and who do not propose returning to New York for twelve months more, who have seen India, besides touching at San Francisco, China, and Japan, scarcely deign to answer the poor Impecunious, for

the father and leader of the party has had private talks and smokes with the landlord, and knows exactly how much the former owes, and how florid and illusory have been his expectations upon each mail-day. Mail-day, by the way, is a misnomer, as there is no regular post in Palestine, letters being received and sent by favour of the consuls only. At the table d'hôte, too, is an English squire, who has ridden from Damascus, attended only by his dragoman, and who is regretting the necessity which compels him to hurry home. Also several French couples; a Spanish nobleman and his son; more Americans, some of whom appear to consider success in securing a competent and honest dragoman as the end, rather than the means, of a tour in the Holy Land; an English family who are starting for the Dead Sea and the Jordan at six in the morning, the young lady members of it being eloquent on the comfort of life in tents, of which they have had an experience of some weeks; our own party of four, the members of which are closely questioned as to the reality of the success of the Suez Canal, and have to explain minutely that ships have really passed through it. There are, too, some rich young men from Manchester, who make our meditated journey to Jericho the occasion of questionable jests, who tell stale stories from the Oxford Art of Pluck, and who would, as it seems, be capable of inditing a comic guide to Palestine and who strike us as objectionable to the last degree When the dealers in relics are admitted after dinner, we are glad to retire. These hawkers of dried and pressed flowers from Gethsemane and other holy spots; of paper-knives, work-boxes, and rosaries made cut of wood from the Mount of Olives; of phylacteries which have been worn by dead and gone Pharisees; of holy parchments, which are warranted ancient; of crucifixes for Catholic visitors, and Testaments bound in olive-wood for Protestants; of Jordan water in hermetically sealed tins; of Palestine walking-sticks, watch-guards, models, buttons, slippers, capes, and fancy-work—have one striking peculiarity. They are all gentle-mannered, soft-spoken, and well-educated. The abundance of religious and charitable institutions in Jerusalem, and the subscriptions from various sources which flow into it, place a good schooling within the reach of all the professors of Christianity we conversed with; and it was rather melancholy to speculate upon the effect on the mind and character of the relic trade these highly educated young people followed. There is abundant chaffering in the hotel drawing-room, one sharp old lady driving a hard bargain for a crucifix, refusing to take it unless its owner would throw in some beads, warranted to have been blessed on the Holy Sepulchere by the priest in charge, which the dealer did eventually, on the elderly pilgrim advancing sixpence on her original bid. Everything offered for sale has, or professes to have, some immediate connexion with one or other of the holy sites of Jerusalem; and "Calvary;" "Will give you a pound;" "The place of the Last Supper;" "But you must let me have the Virgin's tomb as well;" "How much for the Judgment Seat and the group from Gethsemane, if I take the two?" grate on one's ears unpleasantly, as photographs, models, and relics, are passed from hand to hand.

We spend a whole morning at the Mosque of Omar, to which we gain admission by a firman, obtained by Lipman from the Turkish governor the day before, and are edified by our guide's talk concerning the site of the Temple, and by the lazy contempt with which we are regarded by the Mahomedans reposing on the bright sward of its enclosure. There is nothing so beautiful in Jerusalem as this shady, spacious retreat. Here we see the Sacred Rock which, says the Mahomedan tradition, the angel Gabriel held down by main force as it was rising with the Prophet to heaven, and which was tapped in our presence to prove that it was suspended miraculously in mid-air; the reputed judgment-seat of Solomon, and the far-famed Mosque El-Aksa. Be sure that we went laboriously through the argument for and against the site and outline of this mosque being identical with the Basilica of Justinian, and that after much argumentative effort each of us retained the opinion he held before the discussion began. The summit of Mount Moriah is in the centre of the splendid Mosque of Omar, and when its green silk canopy is lifted and it is seen rude and unpolished as when Abraham's hand was stayed, the contrast between it and the ornate structure enclosing it, is solemnly impressive.

We devote another morning to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, where Lipman is unctuously indignant at the evil behaviour of the pilgrims who sleep within its walls at Easter time, and smiles with such offensive incredulity at the stories of the placid old Latin monk, who shows us round, that we have to order him to wait outside. Then the whole painful round of apocryphal anecdotes is gone through. Nearly

the whole of Jerusalem, as it is shown now, is an outrage upon Christianity, and an insult to common sense. But it is, by reason of the awful associations it claims, in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre that the lying traditions become most distressing. The crown of thorns, framed and glazed, and hanging on the wall as if it were a picture; the silver-mounted socket, in which the cross of our Lord stood, with other sockets on each side of it for the crosses of the two thieves, seen in a kind of ornamental loft, gained by steps; the Holy Sepulchre itself, standing in the centre of the rotunda, a tasteless, tawdry fabric like a gandy cage, and with pilgrim after pilgrim crawling on bended knees, and pressing lips and forehead in an agony of devotion to the cold slab of marble within; the Chapel of the Invention of the Cross, where the Empress Helena discovered and had dug up the three crosses, the nails, and the crown of thorns; the Chapel of Golgotha; the altar erected to the penitent thief, and countless other "inventions"—are shown the traveller. It is all very shocking and very sad, and as we repass the Mahomedan soldiers who are on guard at the door of the church—to protect the Christian worshippers of various sects from the results of quarrelling among themselves—and note the half-smile with which they claim our backsheesh, we feel once more that of all the melancholy and fallen places on God's earth, Jerusalem is the most melancholy and the most fallen. For you cannot shake off or escape from the impostures which hem you in, and the stranger can no more visit a sacred site without hearing lying traditions from some one interested in their preservation and acceptance, than he can go over St. Paul's Cathedral without contributing to the funds of the Dean and Chapter. One day we have a grave discussion with an aged priest as to whether the cock crew on a stone pillar in a yard, or on a wall outside it, the venerable father throwing great energy into the controversy, and condemning the wall theory with holy zeal. We had read in Murray that tradition was divided as to which of the two places was the true one, but the priest regarded all doubters of the pillar as unregenerate, and became positively fierce in his denunciations of our supposed heresy.

We had heard, before our visit, of Mahomedan fanaticism, and of Christians being insulted in the streets, but we made a point of being out at all hours, and we did so during our stay without receiving a single act of incivility. Some of us buy absurdly useless brocades from Damascus, as stiff as boards, and with enough gold wire in them to make a respectable bird-cage; others give their attention to photography, and find among the works of a resident operator, Mr. Bergheim, some excellent specimens; and all purchase relics of various kinds from the conventional holy places. When we visit the Jews' Wailing-Place, we have a striking illustration of the social anomalies of Jerusalem. For centuries it has been permitted to the chosen people to weep outside the wall of their Temple, the stones of which are worn smooth by their tears. Their woe was as real and bitter when we saw them as if their loss were recent, and men and women of all ages prayed, and wept, and read prayers, self-absorbed, devoted, miserable. One poor woman, a widow, left her book of prayers in a cleft in the rugged wall, from which it was taken openly, and under our eyes, by a Turkish slut, who, with half a dozen of her disreputable sisterhood, had come down to the Wailing-Place to gird at the Jews. When the owner of the prayer-book returned and discovered her loss, a terrible wail was set up, and all the Jewish women present having been consulted, lifted up their voices and wept.

We had sent Lipman away, thinking his presence might be offensive to the fellow-worshippers he had abjured, and were compelled to despatch a messenger for him before we could ascertain the merits of the case. The prayer-book had been captured forcibly as a prize, and would only be returned on the payment of a fixed ransom. The Jewess had not the money herself, and a collection was being made, when we offered to pay the sum demanded for the restoration of the book. There was no pretence of right, be it observed. The Turkish girl chose to make a raid on the property of the Jew, and the latter meekly acquiesced to the terms on which she would be permitted to buy her own book back. The subscription proceeded slowly, and when we agreed to pay what was asked, we found it was one thing to claim black mail from a Jewess, and another to find a Frank traveller ready to pay it. The she-robber's terms increased upon the instant, and when, after much noise and objurgation on the part of Lipman, we tendered the advanced charge, the precious volume was first formally spit upon and a handful of dust thrown on it, after which it was, with a yell of derision, thrown ignominiously on the ground. "Why couldn't we have applied to

the Turkish police," we asked, "and so had the thief punished?" "It would have cost far more in backsheesh than you have given to the woman," answered the astute Lipman, "and taken up very much of your time besides. You would have had to give backsheesh to the khavasse who took her up, to the jailer who detained her, and to the cadi before whom she was tried, and you would not then have got the book without waiting many days and giving more backsheesh still. Is it not better to have what you want without all that trouble?"

For once we thought Lipman right; and as we left the Wailing-Place, we were followed by a chorus of blessings from the poor Jews. That the secret wish of the heart might be ours; that the sun might shine ever brightly on those we love; that our garners might be always full, and our children numerous and dutiful; that we might reach our native land in safety, and bring joy to our mothers' hearts; that Jehovah might be ever on our side against our enemies, in remembrance of our goodness to the widow —formed the burden of their prayers, which were delivered with a noisy fervour which is indescribable. The women were unveiled, and their streaming eyes, their gay turbans and flowing robes, their Oriental faces full of passionate fire, the imagery of their language, and the poetry of their gestures when they crowded round us, and with uplifted arms vociferously invoked Heaven on our behalf, made a series of tableaux not to be forgotten. But for our intervention, they insisted, the widow's holy book would have been mutilated, or kept by the infidel, a statement which Lipman confirmed. We saw enough of the Jews resident in Jerusalem to believe in many of the accusations brought against them of worthless idleness and deeply-rooted mendicancy. But we can recal no pleasanter experience in Palestine than the fervent gratitude of those we helped at the Wailing-Place, and their outspoken blessings made us think tenderly of their shortcomings, and have been often recurred to in more distant lands.

"WHO WAS HE?"

In the year 18—, an English gentleman, accompanied by his daughters, four in number, bright-haired, blithe, and comely, embarked in the grey of an early autumn morning on one of the steamers which ply between Ratisbon and Vienna. The Maria Teresa, fresh from her recent ablutions, lay with still wetted deck, patiently awaiting on the heaving wave the gathering together of her passengers, some of whom already stood shivering over their carpet-bags, looking wistfully the while towards the streak of orange light which promised warmth and sunshine by-and-bye. The present, however, being but chill and raw, they soon dispersed, and dropping down one by one into the cabins below, whose smouldering stoves made artificial summer, remained ensconced in those lower regions. An old gentlewoman, with a high-bridged nose, bravely raising itself above the folds of a venerable chinchilla boa, was next interred by the steward, under the title of Princess Kaunitz, in the depths of an antiquated glass calèche; a lean soubrette of the same early date, armed with knitting-needles and a progressing stocking, took her place amongst the wadded cushions at her mistress's side, and the steamer's preparations for its voyage seemed complete.

The young English ladies, however, still remained on deck. They had, they said, no notion of being smoked up in the stuffy cabins below, and so they took their seats on one of the benches, and allowed the river wind to toy freely with their golden, auburn, and flaxen tresses, and uplift their blue and green travelling-veils, till they fluttered like pennons on the breeze.

There was now but one remaining passenger beside the English family left on the deck of the Maria Teresa, as she bustled away from the shore, and plunging heavily into the centre stream, began to plough her way through the many and perplexing currents of the great Danube.

The left-behind passenger was also a left-behind kind of looking man; a pale, shabby, yet gentleman-like personage, who hugged himself in the folds of a faded military mantle, swathed about his person after the Italian or Spanish fashion, and from over the top folds of which the wearer's eyes looked forth with an expression strangely made up of indolence and curiosity. The English party had chosen places on a bench rather apart from the surrounding ones on the steamer's deck, and to this retreat the curious, idle eye of the stranger soon followed them, resting on the little group as if he were far too lazy ever to take it off again. At length the young ladies having simultaneously left their places to gaze more nearly at the eddying river, the stranger also rose, sauntered indolently across the deck, and carelessly throwing himself on the bench

they had just quitted, addressed to the gentleman of the party, who still remained seated, some passing remark, nowise startling from its originality, but courteously expressed in French, and having immediate reference to the exceeding beauty of the weather.

From this moment the solitary passenger contrived to attach himself exclusively to the little English group, yet in a manner so wonderfully unobtrusive, so courteous, and so gentleman-like, that it would have been impossible to have taken offence, or even to consider it in the light of an impertinent intrusion, and all the more so as the stranger invariably and unmistakably directed both his conversation and his attentions, not so much to the ladies of the party, as to the elderly gentleman himself.

Are there many elderly gentlemen, of any country whatsoever, who would not—unconsciously to themselves perhaps—have entertained a more favourable opinion of the mysterious personage for so doing?

In conversation the stranger was peculiarly agreeable; rich in the reminiscences of a chequered life, passed, it would seem, to use a somewhat hackneyed expression, between court and camp, and giving unmistakable evidence of a perfect acquaintance with the highest circles of society, both at home and abroad.

"England," he said, "he knew well. His wife" (he was now a widower) "his wife had been an Englishwoman, the daughter of an English nobleman. Yes! he knew England well," and here he sighed heavily behind the top fold of his military mantle.

At twelve o'clock the steamer's bell rang out wildly, to gather together its passengers, who had by that time nearly all returned on deck, and frantically pressed all to partake of the greasy dinner prepared for them below. This announcement, however discordantly conveyed, brought with it, nevertheless, a happy change, and a general new-life kind of sensation seemed to rise in each individual, just as the awakening sap revives the slumbering tree. Every one hurried his or her steps, with more or less self-possession, towards the stairs that led below; and it soon became evident that a lingering sense of decency alone prevented many from actually running to the ladder. Even the venerable glass calêche gave up its princess, who, together with her antique attendant, struggled down the narrow way, and was soon lost in a group of high-hatted Tyrolese, whilst the English party followed the general movement, and also prepared to descend the cabin-stairs.

"Would milord dine so early?" then mildly asked the solitary passenger of his new acquaintance. Mr. D. had already had occasion to assure the stranger that he had no claim to any such title, but the latter having answered him in return that his perfect resemblance to a very dear friend of his who rejoiced in a similar distinction, rendered it difficult—nay, impossible—to address him otherwise, the matter had been given up as hopeless, and "milord" he remained up to the very gates of Vienna.

"If milord were decided to go below, and to dine accordingly," observed the stranger in a resigned tone of voice, "why then, early as it was, and contrary to his usual habits, he too would go below, and would dine."

The party accordingly went down together, and took their seats at the long, narrow table, but some weak white wine-and-water and a slice of apple were the sole results of the excursion as far as the stranger was concerned.

And so the hours wore on. The morning tints of mother-o'-pearl in the sky and on the eddying waters had now changed to the more decided blue of the mid-day. The grand old river bore its freight rapidly along, sometimes between shores steppe-like in their flatness, in their grey, desert colouring, and in the occasional touch of savage life imparted to the scene by some shepherd figure wrapped in untanned skins, or by a herd of wild, uncouth horses, flinging, like Mazeppa's reckless steed, their streaming manes to the river breeze; sometimes between high shelving banks on either side, up which the red-barked pine, climbing higher and higher on its natural amphitheatre of rude rock, lifted its topmost branches in sharp relief against the deep blue sky. In such passages the fresh river breeze, busying itself here and there, would often waft from the shore a gold or scarlet autumn leaf, or some light fragment of forest moss, and lay them softly on the boarded deck of the Maria Teresa; and still the muffled stranger would talk away pleasantly and engagingly on many a subject, and sometimes, with infinite tact, would allow the conversation to drop for an interval, until it became evident that its renewal was desired by willing listeners. Nor did the military mantle invariably display its much faded folds on

the same bench with the grey travelling-dresses of the fair young English ladies; but its owner sat always within call, as it were, should the elderly English gentleman have any information to ask respecting necessary arrangements for their further voyage, or the young ladies any inquiry to make concerning the legend and past history of some ruined tower or castle fragment on the receding shores.

At the fall of night the steamer landed its passengers at the usual halting-place for such as preferred sleeping on terra firma. The inn, which called itself "hotel," was a poor-looking place enough without, and the English family had but slender hopes of meeting with much comfort within. To their no small surprise, however, they were immediately received with that marked attention usually reserved for peculiarly honoured and expected guests, and things within wore a much more comfortable aspect than things without. The landlord himself walked up-stairs before them with a lighted wax-taper, the fire crackled and burned briskly within the huge stove of shining green ware, the supper was ready, the freshest trout, the crispest fried potatoes, were on the table in a twinkling, and the sheets, with their garniture of cotton lace, showed by their snowy whiteness that they very rarely indeed left the shelves of the good wife's walnut presses.

When the English party returned to the steamer on the day following, the muffled stranger was, notwithstanding the early hour, already seated on its deck, on the same bench on which they had seen him last, and looking as if he had never left it. He raised his slouched sombrero courteously to the ladies, and hoped they had passed a tolerable night at the inn. It was but a poor place he added, "un miserable trou," but he had sent on a word to the landlord, and he trusted he had duly attended to his recommendation. (*His* recommendation! thought the young ladies, "Who then was he?")

Towards evening the Maria Teresa, at some signal from the shore, stopped suddenly in her course, and lay trembling on her wheels just opposite a small village at the water's edge. On the narrow strand, waiting apparently for the steamer's passage, stood a little group of gentlemen, with a serving-man and his charge of carpet-bags. A calêche which had brought them to the river-side drove away as the boat from the steamer neared the land, and the party having embarked in it, were soon transported to the deck of the Maria Teresa. The elder of the two gentlemen, who now joined its other passengers, had a feeble step and a somewhat dejected aspect, and wore a seal-skin cap with broad ear-flaps, which almost concealed his countenance; but his companion, a man not much past the prime of life, carried his handsome head aloft, and seemed well pleased to display features which, in their chiselled regularity, and frank, soldier-like expression, reminded one forcibly of the busts and portraits of the bon Roi Henri.

"The Prince de Polignac and the Duc de Grammont," quietly observed the mysterious passenger, as they stepped on board; and in another moment the foreign embrace of intimate acquaintance and friendship was exchanged between himself and the new arrivals. The whole party now withdrew to a retired corner of the deck, and a long and earnest conversation ensued, on political subjects the young ladies thought, from certain expressions which once or twice reached their ears. Be that as it might, the conference lasted until the steamer reached the final landing-place close to Vienna. It had now long since grown dark, and the old and feeble ex-minister of Charles Dix, and the courtly descendant of the De Grammonts, had in some way or other disappeared from the deck of the Maria Teresa in as sudden and unexpected a manner as they had arrived. But the mysterious passenger had not forgotten his friends. "Now mon cher milord," said he, suddenly appearing at his side, "I know you are worrying yourself about the douane, and the searching and pulling about of your carriage, and all the rest of it, and the douane of Vienna certainly is proverbially inquisitive and perplexing; but leave it all to me, no one shall disturb or distress you. I must join my friends to-night; but au revoir, to-morrow, I hope." And with that he disappeared amongst the lights and people on the landing-place.

The English family had now to wait patiently on board the steamer until the tedious operation of disembarking a heavy travelling-carriage was accomplished, and then getting into it (post-horses having been put-to by an orange and black postilion in full imperial stripe), prepared to encounter, a little further on, the petty tyrannies and provocations of an Austrian custom-house.

"Laissez passer la voiture de monsieur!" shouted forth the head functionary of the

bureau of investigation to an under functionary of the same, who was in the act of applying a scaling-ladder to the topmost carriage imperial. "Laissez passer la voiture de monsieur!" And the favoured vehicle rolled on untouched!

The next morning brought, according to his promise, the mysterious stranger to the hotel at which the English family had taken up its quarters. "Now," thought the head of the little party, as he laid down his Galignani's Messenger, and rose to greet his visitor, "now I really must inquire the name of this obliging gentleman, and find out what and who he is." And indeed it was more than full time to ask the question, but a certain indefinable something in the stranger's whole mien and manner had hitherto rendered it peculiarly difficult to put a question, at all times, and under any circumstances, sufficiently awkward and distasteful in itself. Besides, the terms of extreme and even affectionate intimacy on which he evidently stood with the illustrious legitimists already mentioned, seemed to vouchsafe satisfactorily for his position and respectability.

In the mean time, the stranger, standing in an easy attitude with his back to the well-heated stove of shining white porcelain, welcomed his new friends to a city with which it appeared he himself was long and intimately acquainted. The society, he said, the society of the higher circles, was peculiarly agreeable, and had a charm and a prestige all its own. He would be proud and happy to be the means of introducing milord and his amiable daughters to certain petits comités d'élite to which he possessed the "open sesamé." The soirées of Prince Metternich were most agreeable and interesting, but perhaps the young ladies might prefer the bals parés of the Princess de C. The English family really felt grateful to the mysterious stranger for his kind and flattering offers, but begged to decline accepting them, as, indeed, they were not prepared for anything of the kind, having little else in the way of toilet with them than their travelling-dresses. The stranger, with much good-breeding, forbore to press the matter any further, but when about to take his leave, he remembered that there was to be, that very evening, some garden fête at a fashionable place of resort in the suburbs of the city. Perhaps milord and his charmantes demoiselles would not refuse to partake of that sans façon kind of diversion, requiring neither toilet nor preparation. They would have an opportunity of hearing a celebrated band, and the best and newest dance-music, and of witnessing the bourgeois of Vienna in his true element, whilst enjoying the favourite and national amusement of the waltz, and doubtless also many distinguished members of the upper classes would be there as lookers on at the festivities. It was generally a picturesque and animated scene, and as such he felt sure the young ladies would enjoy it. He himself, he added in conclusion, would have the pleasure of joining them, and would be happy to do the honours of the gardens, and point out to their notice any persons of note amongst the crowd.

This last offer was gladly accepted, and the stranger took his leave with a smiling au revoir ce soir! As the door closed after him, paterfamilias again took up his newspaper, but he did not read this time—he soliloquised. "Too civil by half!" thought he to himself. "There must be something under it," and he glanced in the direction of his fair daughters, who were now swarming about the stove like a cluster of bees, stroking its warm white china surface with their still whiter hands, and earnestly discussing the expediency of substituting certain white gauze capotes, with pompon roses, for their sober travelling leghorn bonnets, on the approaching occasion.

The evening hours came round. The English family left the hotel at the appointed time, and, on arriving at the gardens, its members were careful to seat themselves in a conspicuous central spot, so as to be the more readily discovered by their obliging and expected cicerone.

It was, indeed, as he had said, a fair and joyous scene. The night was blue and beautiful as midsummer's brightest, and wonderfully mild. The stars above, and the coloured lamps beneath—the crowd of dancers lightly passing and repassing beneath the lit-up acacias—the exquisite strains of the German waltz, that seductive music of the senses, with its wild, passionate outbursts, and its under-current of deep, tender feeling—all was fancy-stirring, fascinating, and new; so much so, that the English party, sitting delightedly beneath the acacia-trees, listening to the strains of the delicious music, gazing after each fair-haired Austrian as she whirled past them in the giddy dance, for a time forgot both expected cicerone and appointed hour, and when they suddenly remembered the latter, the chimes from a

neighbouring convent told them it had long since passed!

Surprised to have as yet seen nothing of the obliging acquaintance who had so eagerly desired to do the honours of the evening, they now looked round in all directions for the tall, spare form, in the faded military mantle. It was nowhere to be seen. They then left their seats, and walked up and down for some time in the most frequented parts of the gardens. Still no sign of the friend of the Polignacs and De Grammonts! And so another hour passed by.

The elderly English gentleman now cheerfully proposed to leave all expectations, and the gardens; but the four young ladies unanimously confessed to a lingering fancy for exploring its more distant parts before they left. They sauntered about accordingly, here and there, amongst the illuminated alleys; now up one blinking avenue, where the coloured lamps were beginning to sputter and quiver in their little glasses as if quite indignant at being kept up so late; now down another, in which they, as it were, would stand it no longer, and had already gone to bed, and so on, until at last the party came suddenly on a solitary bit, that most solitary of all possible solitudes, the back-ground bit of a public garden; there, where the busy waiter shows his face but rarely, where the coloured lamps are but sparingly suspended to the dusky branches, and where the far-off laugh, and bustle, and music of the crowded haunts penetrate but faintly, like an echo of such things in the medley of a dream.

Here, quite unexpectedly, in a species of arbour, furnished with the usual round marble table and bench of stone, and lit by one dreary little violet lamp, they found the object of their search!

Seated by the table, his elbows rested on it, his head was buried in his hands, his face was buried in his hair. Nothing short of an intimate acquaintance with the very peculiar tournure of the mysterious stranger, and with the no less peculiar fold of the faded military mantle, could have enabled any but the most practised of all possible detectives to identify the courteous and agreeable passenger of the Danube steamer, the confidential friend of the Polignacs and De Grammonts, with the deplorable, forsaken-looking being now before them.

It was impossible to think, for one moment, of disturbing any one in such a phase of complete mental abstraction. The discreet English family forebore to attempt it. Their approaching footsteps had not been heard, and they succeeded in effecting their retreat in silence, gently and cautiously treading on the grassy edges of the gravel-walk, and pausing to look back once more from the end of the avenue at their strange, mysterious friend, they beheld him still sitting precisely as they had left him, his head buried in his hands, his face buried in his hair.

And from that moment to this, through all the intervening years, never have they seen him more. In vain did a natural curiosity prompt unceasing inquiries respecting the mysterious stranger during the whole month which the English family spent in Vienna. In vain was the minute description of his person, dress, appearance, and manners given over and over again to every creature they knew, or ever met. No one had ever seen him—no one had ever seen any one at all like him. The mystery remained a mystery to the last. The unknown traveller had left no card, and, as we are already aware, the elderly English gentleman had neglected to ask in time, "Who was he?"

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THE DOCTOR'S MIXTURE.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER XVIII. NEW GAME FOR THE DOCTOR.

No wonder that he was enjoying himself. The Doctor was giving one of his charming little dinners. There were present Colonel Bouchier, Captain Molyneux, Billy Webber, young Lord Seaman, but not Captain Montague, who had indeed been asked, but who had coldly declined, hearing the sort of party it was to be. "Oh, if you are going to have one of the rollicking symposia, I should be quite out of place." And the next day he wrote a note to Polly to beg she would be good enough to send him back some books of poetry that he had lent her, which included the one containing the marvellous lines which had so amused her.

Notwithstanding this loss, it was the gayest of little parties, of which Polly was the queen. Never had she looked so radiant: a bouquet of gentlemen all clustered round that glowing flower. Where was that honest dislike to the dangerous Captain Molyneux, whom she now received with a sort of pout and pretended anger? The young lord made no secret of his admiration for her glowing charms, and told her plainly that he had never seen any one so handsome. Already dreams of coronets and a splendid presentation in London! Dreams not so incorporeal, after all, considering that she had earnest, as it were, in the highly successful match of her sister. But the handsome captain was not a man to be put aside easily, and he seemed rather to resent the approaches of the new "young puppy." He had that cool, weighty manner, which presses heavily on the object, and cannot be ignored. He had age and experience; the young lord felt the inferiority of youth, which knows not the genteel art of giving a stroke without being rude. Polly herself was a little distracted from her sense of being flattered by such attention, that unconscious preference for the handsome captain struggling with her sense of business. For, to say the truth, this impulsive girl would, if she could, have consulted her own inclinations in every case; but her longing for a settlement, not her will, consented.

"How you are setting your little cap at that Flibbertigibbet," he said to her coolly, "but it's the idlest of games. The boy hasn't an idea above his cricket-bat or billiard-cue. I am afraid he is low enough to have said as many sweet things to the barmaid of the Red Lion."

"What do you mean?" said Polly, flushing. "Please don't mention me and barmaids together!"

"Why not? A barmaid is a fellow-Christian; and, let me tell you, a very dangerous fellow-Christian sometimes, if she is pretty. The next fancy ball you go to, go as a barmaid."

"You are saying all this to provoke me. I know you are."

"Why should I not, as you have announced that you are to hate me? Though I don't think you do quite as much as you did."

"You stupid man!" said Polly, blushing; "don't you see I am only trying to keep up a decent appearance with you for Peter's sake? Go away now."

"Yes, and leave you to carry out your designs on that boy lord. If you would take the advice of your warmest admirer, whom you hate," he added, with a bow, "you would not waste time on such a cub."

"I know what you mean," said Polly, angrily. "It's very rude of you to say so.

It's as much as saying that I am trying to take him in. It's very free of you to speak in that way to me!"

"How do you know that it doesn't come from a thing called jealousy, and that I might be much distressed to see you handed over to a cubling of that sort? I would, indeed, though you don't think it. Blame me, hate me as much you like."

Polly began to pout, poor weak, untrained child! She was not displeased.

Meanwhile, Peter Findlater had the young cubling in hand, listening to his disquisitions with the greatest interest and a smiling attention.

"They've settled it all for you, my lord, up yonder — your mother and my good Mrs. Leader. A splendid match for the daughter; they'll be taking the measure of your cor'net for her brows."

"Not if I know it," said the young gentleman, winking. "I'm too wide awake for that."

"Oh, I see," the Doctor said, lost in wonder and admiration; "you didn't want to be rebellious or to refuse to go on with the scheme, but to let facts speak for themselves! That's like a true man of the world. I see how it is."

"Exactly," said the young lord; "no use going against the grain of the mother. Let her find it out for herself. You know I can't afford to marry except amongst the tip-top swells. You, as a man that knows the world so well, must see that. I have to look out among the nobs of the party—fish out some high-and-dry Lady Mary or other—you see."

"Of course, my dear sir. But the gossips here have all their spy-glasses on Leadersfort at the present moment, and swear that a certain noble lord has been enticed down here. But I needn't tell *you* —you have made out the little game before this, the hoodwinking that poor Leader, making him a tool in the nefarious plot against my poor fellow, Cecil. To be sure, you saw what was going on."

"Didn't I! But they'll not get much help out of me, that I promise you."

Having done this capital stroke of business, the Doctor "left well alone," and turned to his other friends, Billy Webber and the colonel. The good spirits of the night were now being fast wound up, a certain boisterousness set in—those "small plays," of which we saw a specimen at the beginning of the present history. Such peals of laughter — such true schoolboy enjoyment! It was no wonder that his lordship, only recently a schoolboy himself, was perfectly enchanted. There was that flow of roystering spirits for which the Doctor's house had such a deserved reputation—that enjoyment of pure fun and honest laughter. The hours passed by; from eleven till twelve, and even until one. All this while every one remained, Captain Molyneux included, who seemed, notwithstanding Polly's loudly pronounced hatred, to be making great advances in that young lady's regard. He proclaimed openly during the night, that what he was anxious about was to remove this extraordinary hatred in Miss Polly's mind. He appealed to every one—to the Doctor himself—was it not very hard that she should entertain such feelings towards him, and was it not fair that he should try and remove them by all means in his power? Here Polly pouted and laughed, and said he was only wasting his time; that she wished he would leave her alone, and indeed it was high time he should go home. On which Captain Molyneux would sit down beside her just to argue the matter. Then came up the traditional little supper, so appetising and snug, with the hot components, and a mysterious jar of what the Doctor called "Fin's D.D.," which was indeed called for and insisted on by the colonel and others, and which letters, it was whispered to the young lord, stood, in the Doctor's peculiar tongue, for "Devil the Duty!" What songs at the round table! Billy Webber entrancing all by his tender Love thee, Dearest, which, though heard for the hundredth time, delighted the colonel and the other rude souls present. It was two before they rose to go.

"I say, my dear boy," said the Doctor, taking the young lord aside, and putting his arm round his shoulder, "see here. You can't go hammering at the castle-gate at this hour; the draw-bridges will be all up. They are very strict."

"I never thought of that," said the young man.

"But I did," said the Doctor. "And I tell you what, my lord, if you will do us the honour, there's Katey's old room, sweet as the flowers of May, and sheets like a prairie, over which you can expatiate till your limbs are tired. It's only a stretcher, I know—I mean, of course, a four-poster; but still, such as it is, you are heartily welcome."

The young man hesitated. It was very tempting. A cold drive home; then ringing, knocking them up. Some mischievous

thought, too, of "worrying the women" by his absence; so he consented.

"I say," said the colonel, as he walked home with Captain Molyneux, "Fin has got his fishing-rod out again, with the other bit of bait on it."

"Yes; but the fish won't bite, and I'll take care he don't."

CHAPTER XIX. THE DOCTOR MAKES A FRIEND.

Up at Leadersfort, when the family found themselves again sitting into the small hours, waiting for the young lord, and when again it was known, next morning, that his lordship had not even then returned, something like consternation was abroad. Mrs. Leader was in her guest's room at once, and a sort of agitated council held. Mr. Leader was sent for, and presented himself with a sort of guilty bearing. The guest was really angry.

"I wonder," she said, "how you can tolerate this sort of conspiracy against your authority—allow a low creature like this to do what he pleases. Here, now, he is trying to get hold of my son, I declare!" continued she, in great agitation. "I shouldn't wonder if he managed, with that girl of his, to entrap the foolish boy. Something *must* be done, Mr. Leader."

"Oh, it is very improper, and very wrong," said the unhappy little gentleman; "going quite too far."

Lady Seaman looked at him, waiting for him to go on. "Is that all?" she said, contemptuously. "Surely you will take some step to protect your family? This Doctor is a most unscrupulous and clever adventurer, and has laid out that he and his gang shall take possession of this place. You will be helpless in his hands."

"But what am I to do?" said the bewildered Mr. Leader.

"Well, if you ask me, at once take some step to set them at defiance. Show them that you do not care for them."

"Of course," said he, peevishly. "I am quite sensible of all that. They have behaved outrageously. I shall know how to assert myself. Yes, their attempts ought to be put down in a summary way. It is going quite too far."

"And you saw the way Cecil treated you last night," said his wife, "set on, of course, by that man."

All these stimulants had their effect. About four o'clock that day the Doctor, in the highest spirits, was coming out of the Leader Arms, when a brougham from "the Fort" drove up, out of which stepped a gentleman with a black leather bag, "smelling strong of the office," the Doctor thought. Then he recognised the face as that of the solicitor who had come down to Folkestone, and, as he said, "felt a scrape along his heart."

"Ah, Doctor Findlater," said this gentleman, "we have done better this time." And he tapped the little bag. "I haven't a moment to lose. Must start for home."

This was a blow indeed. Old crab face yonder had scored a point against him. The horde of scheming women had at last succeeded in intimidating the poor, shivering little apology for a man. What was to be done now? After all his trouble, all his slaving, if he was only to succeed in marrying his daughter to an invalid pauper—this would be but a poor finish.

He felt rather ashamed of himself. "Well, Peter, you're a poorer creature than I took you for. But I am not done. I'll pickaxe something out of my head yet!"

Indeed it was necessary for him to take some speedy steps; for, to say the truth, he was beginning to be much pressed for money, harassed and hunted by the tradespeople, who had, indeed, given a respite on the news of the great match that had been accomplished, but who, if they once learnt that any hostile steps had been taken, would set on him like fox-hounds. But in truth our Doctor, as the reader will have guessed, has been all this time living on his wits—which are at best but a series of bills drawn at short date, and which must be taken up. What else had he been living on all this time? He had neither money in the funds nor estate.

The Banshee had long since passed out of the family, and as for the little office he held in the infirmary, why, as he often said, "Leader's butler there" had more a year. But his practice? Well, somehow these jovial country doctors do not enjoy extensive confidence; people prefer the stupid, silent men, who cannot even make one laugh. But, worse again, even the frail support on which he was leaning was giving way, and it was now said in the town that no money could be got from the Leader family in answer to many pressing demands. This was now beginning to be remarked as something very odd, though of course it was obsequiously accepted; still, from M'Intyre's, where there was a bill of one hundred and odd pounds, down to the local grocer, to whom only ten pounds was owing, no one could get any money. The Doctor's security being thus looked

on with suspicion, he himself naturally shared the fate of his warranty, and was beginning to be baited in the place.

Some step must be taken. So returning home, and lighting one of the havannahs, he shut himself up in his room to think. Half-an-hour's council—yes, that was the only chance. He set out in the morning for Leadersfort. He got into the demesne, walking through the woods, under cover, as it were, and advancing cautiously towards the garden. He knew that the ladies used to walk there after lunch. Keeping still concealed, he presently heard voices, and saw, on the broad walk, the three ladies walking up and down, no doubt chuckling over the morning's victory. The Doctor waited very patiently for half an hour, when his wishes were gratified. Of a sudden that butler, whose salary exceeded the Doctor's, came out to Mrs. Leader with some message, and that lady followed him obediently. When she was gone, the Doctor emerged, met the others face to face, and took off his hat.

The great lady drew herself up for battle, ready to engage him. Mary Leader was not in the least startled.

"I am so glad of this meeting," he said, "as it gives me an opportunity of speaking to my Lady Seaman."

"To me, sir?" said that lady, haughtily; "I have no wish to consult you on any matter."

"It is of importance to yourself and to your family," said the Doctor, with infinite humility, "and I think you would not be sorry, my lady, when you have heard what I have to say."

"Perhaps you had better hear what Doctor Findlater has to say," said Mary Leader. "I am sure he would not trouble you if it was not important."

"Well, what is it?" said the lady, struggling with curiosity and dignity.

Mary Leader then went away.

"It's about your son. He remained at my house last night. He wants to come there to-day again. He says he will come back after you have left, and stop a month with us."

The lady turned red and pale. "You tell me this. It's scandalous, disgraceful——"

"Whisht!" said the Doctor, "just a moment. Now this looks serious, doesn't it? Well, it ain't for me, I needn't tell you, and we don't want it. D'ye see, my lady?"

Intelligence slowly came back to her eyes.

"You see," he went on, "it comes to this: when a man sees that there has been a set made against him, a sort of solemn league and covenant to put him down, why, ma'am, he can't have human flesh, and blood, and bones, if he doesn't do his best, and stick at little short of nothing. I've not been well treated by this family."

"I don't really see, Doctor Findlater," she said, more mildly, "what I have to do with that."

"Well!" said he, "I don't know. They are a poor sort of rustics, these Leaders, and couldn't manage anything by themselves. This last stroke showed your genius, madam." And he made her a bow.

The lady was pleased in spite of herself. "I really don't understand. Doctor Findlater——"

"Oh, the odds are too much: a man must take care of himself. I have had to do it before," the Doctor said, with great meaning, "when I was put to it. A young man that I was attending took such a fancy to me that he settled an annuity on me for life by bond; ay, and held to it in spite of all his family. I was put to it then. That young man yonder took a similar fancy to us, and I made him hold to it in spite of all they could do. Well, I was put to it there. And in the present case, if I *am* put to it—— It's worth reflecting upon, Lady Seaman."

The lady did reflect. There was weight and force in what the Doctor said. She said at last:

"Upon my word, this is very curious."

"Curious or not," he said, "here's Mrs. Leader coming back, so yes or no? I know what they've been at to-day, but that's no matter. But you could get me—to—see my child. I don't like intruding, you know. Yes or no."

"Well—yes," said the lady.

Here was Mrs. Leader aghast with astonishment, ready to drop with genuine rage. "What does this mean?"

"My dear," said her friend, suddenly, "this gentleman had a little private conversation with me about my son."

"I had no wish to intrude," said the Doctor, bowing, "and I merely wished to see Lady Seaman. Just one word more with your ladyship in private. Tell *her* the whole thing at once, and above board. That will be the readiest way. Secure me access to my child," he added, "and from this day you need have no further anxiety about your son."

The Doctor withdrew. Mrs. Leader still

all agape and not understanding, listened helplessly to what was to come next. Lady Seaman at once frankly tells her "how it is." She had helped Mrs. Leader so far, and with success, the latter must now help her without façon, and put aside any pride. The man had got hold of Seaman, who was such a fool, there was no knowing what might happen. So she had thought it best to temporise. "And so, my dear Mrs. Leader, we must have the man to come and go whenever he likes."

Mrs. Leader started back. "I'll not have him in the house to insult me. Never."

"Do as you please," said the other, coldly; "think it over at least."

The ladies parted rather angrily. But Lady Seaman had an ally who was to be of use.

SIX MONTHS IN THE EAST.

THE WILDERNESS OF JUDÆA.

The Cave of Adullam is rarely visited by the Eastern traveller, and Alee had never been there in his life. He had no doubt but that he could find it, he said, and pilot us safely afterwards across the Wilderness to the rocky plateau near the desolately-placed convent of Mar Saba, on which we had ordered the tents to be pitched for the night; but, to avoid all chance of miscarriage, he would hire a Bedouin familiar with the ground, to act as guide. The day is lovely. The German waiter at the hotel, when we were scanning the cloudy sky in the early morning, had remarked, "It will be fine—it never rains here except when the sky is black in the West," and had reminded us of the sacred words, "When ye see a cloud rise out of the West, straightway ye say there cometh a shower, and so it is." His remark was volunteered while we were at the inn-door inspecting our steeds, and seeing that they were supplied with European saddles. Formerly it was necessary for the traveller who wished to escape the rough torture of a Turkish saddle—an instrument which makes an uninitiated occupant feel as if he were balancing himself on a garden-roller studded with knobs, and which, by the shortness of its stirrups, jolts his knees agreeably into his mouth at every step—to purchase his own harness before starting for Palestine. This is still the best plan for a fastidious rider, for although we escaped the annoyances inseparable from using the saddle of the country, we were never out for many hours in succession, without some portion or other of our harness giving way. There were stirrups of rope; bridles, the several halves of which were sewn together by thread; leather seats, which turned round of their own accord; slender straps, where the holes merged into rents, and which came to pieces from old age; and belly-bands, composed apparently of some tinderous substance, which crumbled at the touch. If it had not been for Alee's readiness of resource and unfailing cheerfulness, I doubt whether we should have had the courage to proceed on our day's journey. But our dragoman's demeanour and assurances carried all before them, so we started gently, out of deference to the frailty of our harness. There were as many Arab helpers and hangers-on assembled in the narrow Jerusalem street to see us off as if our departure were an event of public interest. Bare-headed, bare-footed youths, in gaudy discoloured robes; ostlers, who were remarkably like Joseph's brethren in the picture-books of childhood; venerable old men in beards, who reminded one of Fuseli's phrase, "patriarchs of poverty;" all murmuring softly "backsheesh," or charging at us with the same fell word by look and mien.

We leave the city by the Damascus Gate, which is close to our hotel, and skirting its walls, traverse the road overhanging the Valley of Hinnom, and so, past the modern English burial-ground and the Potter's Field, we are soon on the main road to Hebron. The sun gains power every minute, and the lizards and chameleons are darting rapidly in and out of the stones exposed to its rays. On the bank rising from the opposite side of Hinnom, stands a row of neat modern dwellings, which would not look out of place in the neighbourhood of Battersea. They are the new almshouses erected by Sir Moses Montifiore for indigent Jews, and are all occupied. But, as was our invariable experience in Jerusalem and its vicinity, the real and apocryphal traditions crowd upon us so quickly, that we have difficulty in mastering the externals of each. On that lonely and blighted tree, seen high up to the left yonder, Judas Iscariot is said to have hanged himself. It is close to the ruins of the house of Caiaphas the high priest, and on the naked crown of the Hill of Evil Counsel, which rises abruptly on the north side of the ravine before us. The Potter's Field consists of a broad natural terrace half-way up this ravine, Hinnom below it, and the

house of Caiaphas above. The photographs and pictures of this spot make it gloomier than it appears in reality, by reason of their almost invariably bringing its harsh rocks and ancient burial-places into prominent relief. By these means that accursed and blighted look is given it which accords so well with its shocking traditions, but which is, as we decided, misleading. The Potter's Field is more fertile than the rest of the ground near. The olive flourishes on it, and the view over the valley and towards Zion is comprehensive and picturesque.

The plain of Rephaim, where David conquered the Philistines, is before us, and leaving the towers and spires of Jerusalem on our left, we cross it, and after an easy ride of about a mile come to a well surrounded by rough stones, the story of which reminds us that we are on the road the Wise Men followed when they were dismissed by Herod, and were on their way to the new-born babe at Bethlehem. When stooping to draw water here, they saw, it is said, their guiding star mirrored in its waters, and followed it. We are in no mood this morning to dispute or affirm any such tradition. We are bound for the Cave of Adullam, and are full of speculation as to the chances of our reaching it, and of what we have seen and left unseen in Jerusalem. We had visited the Leper Colony the afternoon before. This wretched place is close by the Zion Gate, and consists of small cottages, built apparently of wattle and dab, and with their backs to the passer-by. Neither door nor window in this colony is allowed to look upon the public street, and it was as if one were walking through a thoroughfare both sides of which had by some freak been reversed. The miserable lepers must not offend the senses of those whose business or religion takes them through the Gate of Zion, or to the Armenian Convent, or the Tomb of David, hard by. So they are shut off in the way described, wretchedly poor, but intermarrying among themselves, and perpetuating a race given over to disease. They are allowed to leave their houses. Basking in the sun on the opposite side of the road to us, were three male and two female lepers, who begged by signs, but did not venture to approach us, or to leave their place. Their flesh was not white as we had expected, but was covered with ulcerous sores and swellings, reminding one of the worst examples of scrofula aggravated by dirt, climate, poor living, and neglect. We threw them some small coins, Lipman telling a woman who was nearly blind the position of those which fell short, and giving her permission to crawl to the spot and pick them up after their excellencies (ourselves) had left.

It is while we are talking over this experience of the day before, discussing leprosy and the means taken to alleviate its horrors, asking Alee's opinion, and finding that he has a profound contempt for the medical art, that we come to the convent of Mar Elias, and to a rock by the wayside, which is said to be marked miraculously. Against its stony surface Elijah reposed under the shade of an olive tree, when flying from Jezebel, and here angels supplied his wants. We dismount and examine the impression which is shown as that left by Elijah's form, and pronounce it singularly unlike what it pretends to be; while Alee looks to the straps, and ropes, and bandages which do duty with us for harness. There have been one or two breaks in it already, and George, in the profundity of his horsey knowledge, has insisted upon exchanging his steed for the pony belonging to one of Alee's staff. We have ridden leisurely, and it is not more than three-quarters of an hour since we left Jerusalem. Now, however, the white and shining city disappears altogether from view. We pay but scant attention to the grey walls of the convent of Mar Elias, for Alee warns us that Bethlehem is in sight, and that we are approaching what Jew, Christian, and Mahomedan agree to be Rachel's tomb. Bethlehem looks like a fortified town, and its vast block of convents—Greek, Latin, and Armenian—strongly built of stone, and commanding the plain of Moab, resembles a feudal castle. The road we are on now deviates to the left, and would take us to the village in less than an hour. We have determined, however, to defer our visit to Bethlehem, and so take the bridle-path, into which the highway to Hebron resolves itself. We have to ride in single file, and over slippery blocks of stone, for the road gets more and more rugged, and we are dependent solely upon the sure-footedness of our horses for our safety. After leaving Rachel's tomb: in which we find a wandering Bedouin devoutly prostrating himself in prayer, and which consists of a venerable stone building with three sides, and a niche, or Mahomedan praying-place: the scene becomes wilder every moment. The bridle-path is as the dried-up bed of some tempestuous torrent, and our horses clamber rather than walk over its gigantic

masses of smooth, slippery rock. Mountains stretch up on each side of us, and form a vista of grey stone so thickly studded with smaller blocks of the same hue, as to resemble a crowded graveyard.

We have read of the countless wild blossoms of Syria, and of the brilliant carpet they form; but here we see no vestige of leaf, or shrub, or flower. It is all cold stone, and of an unvarying neutral grey, which makes the landscape appalling in its deadly want of colour. Upon its rocks the hot sun beats down fiercely, and the horses slide as often as they walk. The main road between Jerusalem and Bethlehem had been rough enough, but there had been signs of cultivation on either side. Where we are now is as bare as absence of soil can make it.

As our party went stumbling along, its members made an amusing contrast to the beings familiar to friends and relatives at home. The sheik made not the slightest concession to climate and circumstance. He dressed as nearly as possible in the habit of his political life. This he did conscientiously, wearing white shirts, with good stiff turn-down collars, tightly-fitting light kid gloves, neat boots, and trousers, waistcoat, and coat which would have done honour to the Row. A stiff black felt seaside cap, round which was twisted a handkerchief, not with flaunting ends, but tightly fastened down like a white hat-band, was the only thing about him which differed from his ordinary dress in London, and throughout our wanderings the sheik might have been taken as he stood, and transferred to the Steyne at Brighton, without suggesting incongruity. Edward was nearly as conventional, though in a different way. Constantinople, Egypt, and the desert had played havoc with the faultless raiment he brought from England; so, before leaving Alexandria, he bought at one of the European shops which abound in the Frank quarter of that unsavoury city, one of those suits of ready-made slop clothes which look so charming on the wax figures in the Minories. After a few days' rough wear on horseback these shrank and gave way, became baggy where they should have been tight, and contracted where ease was necessary, and long before our travels were over our friend's attire became a painful subject to touch upon. An ordinary felt slouch hat, with a streaming puggaree, completed it, and formed an efficient protection for head and neck. To picture George to yourself, you must have seen the virtuous young farmer in a Surrey melodrama; be intimately acquainted with the get-up of the rustics who enlist on market day, and wear their colours ostentatiously; and have stayed at the house of a trainer of English race-horses. Besides combining the characteristics of the three types quoted, he, the only hunting man in the party, rode by preference what looked in the distance like a rat, with his feet nearly touching the ground on either side. A light-coloured hunting-hat with inside ventilators, and decorated with an Arab keyfea, which streamed gaily in the wind, and a bucolic shooting-suit, made up his costume. Your servant wore a yachting-jacket and trousers of thin blue serge, recalling the "bold smuggler" from Whitechapel, who used in former years to whisper hoarsely in your young ear of bandannas and cigars. He, further, tied up his head in Eastern fashion. First a white skull-cap, and over this a native fez, then a thick layer of white wraps, and lastly the keyfea of striped silk, and found this accumulation to make a capital headdress, and an efficient protection against the sun. We had, before leaving Egypt, reduced our baggage to modest compass, and when beginning tent-life we left much of what remained at the Jerusalem Hotel until our return there. Two large travelling-bags held a complete change of clothes, and all necessaries for the four; so that if we were caught in one of the pitiless mountain storms of Palestine, we could make ourselves comfortable at night. In addition to these were the waterproofs and overcoats, which Alee carried, with the lunch, on his saddle or in its bags, and our stock of clothes proved ample.

We dressed for dinner every night. That is, we put off the clothes we had ridden in for those in our bags. Alee's staff of Arabs, with the bedding, tents, and baggage, had always gained the rendezvous before us, and a sponge bath and an entire change before the meal of the day, were welcome luxuries after spending long hours in the saddle. In short, our life in the Wilderness was, in every particular, more like travelling in civilised lands than we had believed possible. Wherever Englishmen are in the present day, the form and colour of their dress—I am not speaking of its texture—is pretty much what it is at home, and the Arab contractors for food, horses, and shelter, are such masters of their business, and have gained such experience of our national habits, that we found our departure from every-day cus-

toms to be far rarer and more unimportant than we had anticipated.

Our guide to the Cave of Adullam turned out a fraudulent impostor. He was a Bethlehemite whom Alee had engaged after due inquiry, and we thought from the very first that he looked too picturesque to be useful. A heavy crimson turban, long black curls falling over a swarthy face and neck, moustache and pointed beard, but no whiskers, dark gleaming eyes, stout white linen trousers so full as to seem petticoats, a sheep-skin jacket lined with bright scarlet cloth and worn inside-out, bare brown calves and feet, the latter thrust into red slippers, a large knife in brass-bound sheath, a long single-barrelled gun across the shoulder, a habit of singing barbaric ditties at the top (or bottom, for he was very gruff) of his voice, and a jaunty devil-may-care air — such was our false guide. He was picked up in Bethlehem, was hired solely for the Cave of Adullam, and undertook to pilot us thither, and to Mar Saba afterwards, it being stipulated that we were to go to the latter place direct. With this understanding we started again, the villager leading, and Alee lingering for a few minutes to complete the purchase of some Bethlehem wine we had commissioned him to buy, to supplement the rapidly decreasing stock of sherry and claret we had brought from England. Let me remark, in passing, that we found this "wine of the country" to add a new pang to the terrors of thirst. It tasted like a decoction of the skin, stone, and stalk of the grape, from which every drop of juice had been excluded, and was never touched without a succession of shudders and wry faces.

Onward rides the handsome vagabond our leader, singing always, and cantering or trotting as it pleases his wayward will, and with scant consideration for the poor old dappled grey he bestrides, and presently he leads the way at a smart pace down a rugged glen, and we pass through a miserable little village, from the doors of which savage Bedouin faces look out, and where every house is in ruins. A few begrimed vessels of tin are the only furniture these dilapidated huts contain; and the all-covering abyieh, or robe of coarse camel's hair, is the sole garment of those within. Few things change in the East, and "raiment of camel's hair," with a "girdle round the loins," comprise the ordinary and sufficient dress of the men of the Wilderness. We scour barren plains, and pass up rocky defiles, looking now and then to our pistols, and not unfrequently stopping for Alee and the Bethlehemite to exchange civilities with some wandering member of the wild Ta' âmrah tribe, who starts from behind a rock, or gallops down upon us from afar. The character of this tribe does not stand high, but we find its members inoffensive, and when we resolve to climb the almost horizontal path leading to the summit of the Frank mountain, the Bethlehemite — who as we discover subsequently has never been over the ground in his life, and has already taken us miles out of our way — philosophically remains below and holds amicable converse with half a dozen of the Ta' âmrahs, all armed, who emerge one by one from the square, small black tents which are clustered at the mountain's side. The genuine Bedouin's tent is always black and always small; and there is a strong family likeness among the children of the desert, their owners. "Riding up the dome of St. Paul's on horseback is the only pursuit I can compare to our ascent of the Frank mountain, for it was slippery, unprotected, and inconceivably steep," is recorded in my journal. This mountain is, however, the only eminence in the Wilderness of Judæa which stands out conspicuously, and we were amply repaid when we reached its summit. The ruins on the mountain-top, consisting of a circle some seven hundred and fifty feet in circumference, surrounded by the remains of a stout wall with four heavy round towers at the cardinal points, are unmistakably Roman. But history is silent concerning them, and tradition is as wild and contradictory as ever. This solitary mountain was held by the Crusaders for forty years after the fall of Jerusalem; it is the site of the fortress and city of Herodium, erected by Herod the Great, and to which his body was brought for burial from Jericho; it is the Beth-haccerem, or House of the Vineyard mentioned by the prophet Jeremiah, as a well-known beacon station — all these things are said. What enchanted us was the comprehensive view we obtained of the ground over which David roamed with his followers, and evaded the mighty Saul. This Wilderness of Judæa is the very spot for one at odds with authority, being full of strong natural defences, and so bare as to make it impossible for any host to creep up unobserved. Neither tree nor shrub is visible. Low-lying rolling mountains, like vast billows of stone and barren soil, stretch round us,

one behind the other for miles. Adullam lies hidden behind yon stony crest; that precipitous chasm which makes so rude an opening in the rocky hill-side runs below its Cave; the mountains of Moab, crimson, rigid, and stern, the sheeny waters of the Sea of Death, dazzlingly blue; the building on a ridge beyond Jerusalem, which the Mahomedans declare to be the tomb of Samuel; and the cairns formed by the wandering Mahomedans, each of whom adds a small stone on his first beholding a holy site, are all gazed at in turn. But it is the deadly barrenness of the vast and solemn Wilderness, and its obviously unaltered character since the scenes of sacred history were enacted in it, which impress one most strongly. We have before our eyes exactly what David saw, and yonder simple shepherd-lad, singing to his flock, is perchance spending his morning as David did.

We descend, and after another hour's ride up the hills and over the dales of a pathless solitude, losing our way often through the pestilent incompetence of the Bethlehemite, we are scrambling on foot down the steep circuitous path which leads to the entrance to Adullam. We have collected three or four Bedouin followers, in the course of our devious wanderings, and the Bethlehemite, who is quite untouched by the reproaches we have translated to him by Alee, recognises some fellow-villagers who have come over here for—how strangely it sounds!—partridge shooting. They all insist upon accompanying us. Alee has tethered the horses on the plain above, and confesses his fear that they will be stolen while we are in the Cave. The men with us are armed, and are more numerous than ourselves, so we hit on the expedient of buying their swords as relics, a transaction which is accomplished after much chaffering between Alee and the vendors, and one of these, in its common brass-bound wooden scabbard, hangs before me as I write. The swords bought, Alee leaves our Bethlehemite, with many threats and pointings to the pistols, in charge of the horses, and we clamber along the narrow ledge leading to the mouth of the Cave. It is infinitely difficult and rugged, and consists of a tortuous path a few inches wide, which twines along a jagged precipice five hundred feet high, on the other parts of which there is not footing for a wild goat. It is dizzy work, but we keep our eyes on the wall-like rock which stretches above us, avoid looking into the chasm below, and move slowly onwards, continually using both hands and feet. A huge block of stone has fallen across the broken pathway close to the entrance to the Cave. We clamber over it—not without the sort of help the Arabs give strangers at the Pyramids, and which consists of butting you from behind, while half dislocating your shoulders by tugs in front—and are at the opening to a small grotto, which leads to a natural winding gallery some thirty feet long. We pant and squeeze through these, doffing most of our clothing, on Alee's advice, and find ourselves at last in a noble natural chamber one hundred and twenty feet long, and from thirty to forty-five feet wide. This is the Cave of Adullam. The candles we have brought with us are attached to the walls, and the arches and stalactites of the lofty roof are seen through the darkness, irregular and dim. There is ample space here and in the recesses round for several hundred men; and when we consider its all but impossible approach, the ease with which it could be defended from the attack of what would be an overwhelming force elsewhere, its comparative nearness to Bethlehem, and weigh the evidence for and against the accuracy of the site, we come unanimously to the conclusion that tradition is in this instance right. Here it must have been that David longed for "the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate," when the village was garrisoned by the Philistines; and along this cleft in the rock the three "mighty men" came after they had broke through the enemy's lines, obtained the coveted water, and were bringing it in triumph to their chief. There are several narrow passages branching out of the great Cave, one of which runs for forty yards, and takes the explorer to a pit ten feet deep, into which he must drop, and there creep on all-fours, and finally crawl for seventy yards more, when he reaches another immense natural chamber. This is the end of the Cave, so far as European travellers know, though the Arabs insist that subterranean passages extend from it for miles, even to Tekoa and Hebron. When we emerge into the blessed sunlight again, dusty, heated, and out of breath, Alee spreads his snow-white cloth and produces lunch. The Bedouins watch us from a distance, and we eat, drink, and smoke in a small cleft in the hill which overlooks the Wâdy and the terrible defile between Adullam and the outer world.

It is not until after a long and pleasant rest that we set forth again, and that the Beth-

lehemite's fraudulent pretence culminated. He had been paid beforehand by Alee, making this a condition of accompanying us; and on our gaining a mountain-path, which we remembered to have ridden along in the morning, attempted to give us the slip. He had understood that he was engaged to lead us back by way of Bethlehem, he said (a palpable falsehood), a proceeding which would, if we had allowed it, have landed him at home, and left us with the worst part of our journey to perform after sundown. We were resolute against this, and determined, while finding our own way across the Wilderness, to keep our faithless guide with us as a punishment. He protested vehemently, and tried hard to sneak off. But we were better mounted than he, so we surrounded him, and kept him prisoner. One or other of us always had him within touching distance, and when he eased his mind by yelling, we shouted our loudest in return; when he waved his gun wildly over his shoulder we smiled, to show him we were used to it; and when he stuck spurs into his steed we quickened our pace, so that the distance between us should not increase. We were lost in the trackless Wilderness, which was no longer stony, but a succession of barren moors. Alee, however, once more proved himself equal to the occasion. There was not a vestige of road or pathway, the impostor would only direct us towards Bethlehem, and there was every prospect of our not finding the tents, and of having to spend the night in the open, without food or shelter, and with jackals and perhaps a stray hyena for company. But, after hours of what seemed like purposeless wandering, Alee recognised a landmark. Soon after this we gained our tents, with their smoking, savoury dinner, and their welcome fire. The impostor became quite cheerful when he found we were the stronger, and at the close of the day presented himself for a bonus of backsheesh, with the beaming confidence of a man who feels his acts and intentions to have been so meritorious as to call for extra reward.

A LOST LITERARY ART.

We seem to have lost the art of writing epigrams. It may perhaps be added that we were never conspicuous in this respect; yet at one time we made at least a decent figure, whereas now we doubt if there is a good epigram-writer in the English language, or even a bad one, so completely has this particular kind of literature decayed. In making the remark, we may be understood as using the word "epigram" either in its modern and restricted sense, or in its ancient and larger signification of "a writing on," "an inscription," such as were associated with offerings in the temples of the pagan divinities. Similar sentences were afterwards inscribed on statues of gods, heroes, &c., and on public buildings; and ultimately any terse little poem, giving expression to a single and not complex sentiment, feeling, or reflection, came to be called an epigram. With us, however, an epigram must be a pungent sally of wit, with a sting at the end of it—in fact, a sarcasm very finely pointed and exquisitely polished. The Greek epigram might be that; but it might be many other things as well, and was as often amiable or pathetic as bitter. "It was adopted," says the preface to the first English translation of the Greek Anthology (1806), "by the lawgiver to convey a moral precept, and by a lover to express a tender sentiment, but most of all by those who wished to perpetuate the affection felt by the living for the dead; and as very little can be done in the compass of a few couplets, the principal aim of each writer seems to have been to do that little with grace." Greek epigrams, ordinarily, did not exceed six or eight verses, though they would occasionally run to much greater length; and their simplicity was often so extreme, that with the French an "epigramme à la Grecque" means an epigram devoid of point. With the Latin writers, the epigram was generally much sharper and more bitter than with the Greeks; indeed, it was sometimes actually brutal in its severity; and it is noticeable that with ourselves this form of composition is commonly used as a weapon of offence. Even in the restricted sense, however, we have no epigrams in the present day. Assuredly our times offer abundant material for the epigrammatist; but the epigrammatist is not to be found. The immense amount of so-called comic writing that is poured forth every week at the present day has led to a degeneration and vulgarisation of the art. The whole thing has become base and mechanical—a manufacture, instead of an inspiration. Jokes are contracted for, farmed, supplied to order, as per sample. The keenness of the edge has gone with use; the steel is hacked and dull, and often wielded by a clumsy hand.

During the last century, we had several very fair writers of epigrams of the sharp

and bitter kind. Garrick and Quin were famous for this sort of impromptu, or assumed impromptu; and the power to produce such verses seems to have been regarded as a necessary qualification of the man of wit. The early part of the present century had its epigrammatists also. Canning, and the other contributors to the Anti-Jacobin, possessed a great facility in this respect; and although the periodical alluded to belonged to the closing years of last century, the writers were young men, and earned their chief distinction at a later date. Then came the brilliant wits and poets of the days of the Regency and George the Fourth, many of whom could throw these stinging little darts about with much effect; but the Victorian era has for the most part been barren enough in the particular branch of literary art which we are now considering. Of the gentler kind of epigrams, such as the Greeks excelled in, we have not many specimens in the English language, excepting such as have been translated. Ben Jonson wrote a whole book of epigrams, and seems to have contemplated publishing others; but those we possess are chiefly satirical and savage, and many do not at all answer to our conception of an epigram. The best of the complimentary poems is that On Lucy, Countess of Bedford, which is certainly most delicately wrought. The verses on the death of the poet's youthful son have something antique in their character; but the handling is clumsy, with the exception of two exquisitely touching lines, to which, we cannot but think, it would have been better if the whole composition had been confined:

> Rest in soft peace, and, ask'd, say: Here doth lie
> Ben Jonson his best piece of poetry.

Herrick—who, though an English clergyman, had very much of the ancient pagan in him—has left us a great many epigrams; some pointless, some coarse beyond expression, and some of the purest and most fascinating beauty. His epitaph on his maid-servant is very Greekish in tone and manner; full of a certain depth yet continence of pathos, and as delicately scented as the flower it mentions:

> Underneath this turf is laid
> Prudence Baldwin, once my maid.
> From her happy spark here let
> Spring the purple violet.

Of modern Englishmen, no one has written epigrams of such a pure Hellenic beauty as Walter Savage Landor, who had so imbued himself in the literature of antiquity, and had lived so long under the southern sky, and surrounded by the classical associations of Italy, that he seems to have lost all his Anglo-Saxon uncouthness, and to have acquired the peculiar graces of the ancient civilisation. It is unfortunate that some of his compositions of this nature should have shown the objectionable qualities of that civilisation also; but we gladly pass away from these considerations, and fix our thoughts on such gems of feeling and perfect workmanship as the little poem on Rose Aylmer, a lady to whom Landor had been attached, and who died, while very young, in India:

> Ah, what avails the sceptred race,
> Ah, what the form divine!
> What every virtue, every grace!
> Rose Aylmer, all were thine.
> Rose Aylmer, whom these wakeful eyes
> May weep, but never see;
> A night of memories and of sighs
> I consecrate to thee.

Lamb, writing to Landor, said of this poem that it had for him a charm he could not explain, adding: "I lived upon it for weeks." The charm is, indeed, difficult to define; yet it is there—intangible, but intense. Examined in detail, one might find a touch of commonplace in the opening lines; but the conclusion is exquisite, and the whole trembles with the very music of emotion. The same writer's Dying Speech of an Old Philosopher, written in January, 1849, when he had still nearly sixteen years to live, is also admirable in its calm, human dignity and courage:

> I strove with none, for none was worth my strife:
> Nature I loved, and, next to Nature, Art:
> I warm'd both hands before the fire of life;
> It sinks, and I am ready to depart.

Among modern translations from the Greek and Latin, one of the best is Leigh Hunt's version of Martial's epitaph on the child Erotion:

> Underneath this greedy stone
> Lies little sweet Erotion;
> Whom the Fates, with hearts as cold,
> Nipp'd away at six years old.
> Thou, whoever thou may'st be,
> That hast this small field after me,
> Let the yearly rites be paid
> To her little slender shade.
> So shall no disease or jar
> Hurt thy house or chill thy Lar;
> But this tomb here be alone
> The only melancholy stone.

This charming little poem, like all the best of the pagan utterances about death, has an indescribable aroma of tender regret, lingering, as it were, about the inevitable decrees of Nature, and sweetening the bitterness of mortality. If such modes of regarding the great mystery open no gulf

of immeasurable being beyond the narrow portals of the grave, they bring no terrors either, but sound like a hushing and affectionate voice out of the common motherliness of earth. And, indeed, there is nothing of materialism in such thoughts. The shade of little Erotion hovered about the "melancholy stone" that covered her handful of dust, and might in time float up, a winged Psyche, into the Elysian fields.

To Leigh Hunt we are also indebted for a paraphrase of an epigram by the Greek poet, Meleager, of which the translator says that he always seems to scent the very odour of it, as if he held a bunch of flowers to his face. It is certainly supremely beautiful:

> A flowery crown will I compose:
> I'll weave the crocus, weave the rose;
> I'll weave narcissus, newly wet,
> The hyacinth and violet;
> And myrtle shall supply me green,
> And lilies laugh in light between:
> That the rich tendrils of my beauty's hair
> May burst into their crowning flowers, and light
> the painted air.

The great body of Greek epigrams is that of the Anthology. An "anthology," strictly speaking, is a collection of flowers, and it is used metaphorically to denote a set of short, choice pieces, culled, like a nosegay, from various sources. There are Latin as well as Greek anthologies, besides many in the Oriental languages, such as Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Indian, Chinese, &c. An admirable epigram is translated by Sir William Jones from the Persian poet, Firdusi—admirable for the feeling which dictated it, and for the point with which it is expressed:

> Ah, spare yon emmet, rich in hoarded grain!
> He lives with pleasure, and he dies with pain.

The collections best known to the western world are those in the Greek tongue, made at various times by various persons, and since combined into one work. An English translation in prose, with some metrical versions added, is published in Bohn's Classical Library. Some of the pieces seem to us moderns singularly trivial and pointless; others, again, are delightful for their simplicity and grace, and for the beautiful translucency of the thought and the expression. The Greek epigram, from having been, as we have shown, originally inscribed on votive offerings, on temples, and on statues, has a kind of clear-cut, sculpturesque character, very pleasing for its effect of completeness and definition. Many of those in the Anthology are like pictures cut on gems. A healthy perception of beauty was the happy portion of the Greek; and it is noticeable that, although he was often immoral, he was seldom gross. You cannot say the same thing of the Romans. Even Catullus, despite his poetry, and the somewhat Hellenic tendency of his mind, is often abominably coarse; and so is Martial. Certainly, the Greek Anthology itself is far from irreproachable, considered on moral grounds; but it is not externally revolting—at least, judging by the English translation to which we have alluded; and it contains much that is blameless as well as beautiful. We add a few specimens:

A Pious Offering.—Ye lowly dwellings, and holy hill of the Nymphs, and rills under the rock, and pine, a neighbour of the water, and thou, Hermes, son of Maia, the saviour of fruits, and Pan, who keepest the rock pastured by goats—kindly receive these slight cakes, and this bowl full of wine, the gift of Neoptolemus, the son of Æacides.—*Leonidas of Tarentum.*

A Prayer for Funeral Rites.—Ye shepherds, who tend goats and fine-fleeced sheep while walking over this back-bone of a mountain, pay, I pray by the earth, a slight but agreeable tribute to Cleitagoras, for the sake of Proserpine underground. Let the sheep bleat for me; and let a shepherd on the unpolished rock pipe gently to them while feeding; and let a person of the place in earliest spring cut down flowers in the meadow, and adorn my tomb with a garland; and let him bedew it thrice with milk from an ewe that has fine lambs, by holding her udder full of milk over it, moistening even the base of my tomb. There are favours paid to the dead, and there are returns made even by the dead.—*The Same.*

A Virgin's Petition.—O thou [Cybele] who takest thy course around Dindyma and the peaks of Phrygia, burning with fire, mayest thou, O mother most venerable, cause to grow tall the little Aristodicé, the daughter of Seilené, to Hymen and to a marriage; for which I have strewn many things before thy fane, and near thy altars my virgin hair here and there.—*The Same.*

A Lover's Conceit.—With her eye has Didymé caught me: woe's me! I melt, like wax by the fire, on seeing her beauty. But if she were black, what then? Nay, even charcoal, if we warm it, shines like rose-buds.—*Asclepiades.*

Cupid Sleeping.—When we arrived at a grove in deep shade, we found within the child of Cythéra, like, as to his mouth, to ruddy apples. He had neither an arrow-holding quiver, nor a bent bow; for they were hanging on wide-spreading trees; and he was slumbering, fettered by sleep, and smiling among rose-leaves; and brown bees above him kept going to his wax-shedding lips, for the sake of getting honey.—*Plato.*

An Invitation to Repose.—Here, throwing yourself, wayfarer, along the green meadow, rest your limbs, rendered soft by laborious suffering, where the pine-tree, agitated by the breath of the zephyr, shall soothe you while listening to the music of the tettix [a species of grasshopper or cricket, the same as the cicada], and the shepherd on the mountain is playing on the pipe his mid-day tune near a fountain, and in a thicket, under a shaggy plane-tree, is avoiding the heat of the autumnal dog-star; and to-morrow you shall pass the grove. To Pan, who says this to you, be duly obedient.—*Uncertain Author.*

A great deal more might be written on the subject of epigrams. The object of this article, however, was not to exhaust the topic, but to suggest that a very pleas-

ing form of poetry might be once more cultivated to the advantage of our literary manners.

RAIDS OVER THE BORDER.

THE LAND OF SCOTT. PART II.

THE King's, now the Queen's Park, to the rear of Holyrood, covers an area of about four miles, and includes Arthur's Seat, and the bold precipices of Salisbury Crags. There is a carriage drive round the base of the crags, which affords a fine view over the city. Why or when the mountain acquired the name of the great mythological king of the Ancient Britons, has never been satisfactorily explained. The derivation of the apparently English name of the crags is equally obscure; though in all probability the English city and plain, and the Scottish cliff, received their appellation from some Celtic word or tradition in those remote ages when the whole population of Britain was Celtic and Cymric. Few cities possess so extensive and romantic a pleasure-ground, combining such hill and dale, such wild and sylvan scenery, and from "the topmost top," eight hundred feet above the level of the sea, such a magnificent panoramic view of land and water, and far-stretching hills on the outer verge of the horizon. In the bygone days of imprisonment for debt, Scottish debtors, when reduced to the last extremity of impecuniosity, were free from arrest within the limits of the King's Park and the Abbey of Holyrood, and had in consequence a far pleasanter Alsatia than fell to the lot of similar unfortunates in other parts of the world. The place is still a refuge for those who, not knowing the elementary rule of life—the making of both ends meet—find themselves at issue with the law and their creditors.

But Arthur's Seat and the Queen's Park have nobler memories than these. The place is consecrated to song and romance. Who has not read the pathetic ballad of "Waly! waly!" a composition that has drawn tears from many a gentle and beautiful eye, and will do so yet again? It is difficult for any traveller, who is ordinarily well read in this class of literature, to walk up Arthur's Seat without recalling the mournful history which the ballad recounts: that of Lady Barbara Erskine, wife of the Marquis of Douglas, repudiated by her husband on a cruelly false charge, and who, in the agony of her unmerited disgrace, wandered, not crazed, but nearly so, through the glens and up the steeps of Arthur's Seat, drinking of the water of St. Anthony's Well, wishing that she were dead and gone, with the green grass growing over her, and exclaiming piteously:

> Oh, waly! waly! and Love is bonnie
> A little time, while it is new,
> But when its auld it waxeth cauld,
> And fades away like morning dew.

Here, too, on the road up the hill, are laid some of the most touching scenes of the Heart of Mid-Lothian, interwoven with the love and the sorrow of the beautiful lily of St. Leonard's, and of the homelier affections of her true-hearted sister Jeanie Deans. Here also was, and is, a well called "Tod's Well," whence Edinburgh in the bygone days, when water was a scarcer commodity than it ought to be in any well-regulated municipality, supplied the city with as much of the pure element as sufficed for that primitive and unsanitary time. It may be mentioned that, as aqua vitæ in Latin, eau de vie in French, and usquebae in Highland Gaelic, severally mean the "water of life," so "toddy," of which the Scotch at home and abroad seldom lose the love or the flavour, seems, if we may believe an allusion in Allan Ramsay's poem, the Morning Interview, to have originally meant water without any whisky in it. Speaking of the adjuncts to the breakfast-table, the tea brought from the eastern, and the sugar brought from the western hemisphere, Ramsay says that Scotland brings to the feast "no costly tribute," but

> Only some kettles full of Toddian spring,

and explains the passage by the statement in a foot-note, that "Tod's Well supplies the city with water." The custom in Scotland, in the whisky trade, to invoice whisky as aqua, lends strength to the supposition, and tends to disprove the allegation of the dictionaries that the word "toddy," is derived from India, where it signifies a kind of arrack.

The view from Salisbury Crags, by day or night, in fine weather or in foul, is one of the finest in Great Britain. That from the top of Arthur's Seat is unrivalled. Below stretches the ancient city, with its Castle on the Rock, like the crown upon the forehead of a queen, and a little to the north, the new city, symmetrical and palatial, crowned by the Calton Hill and its clustering monuments; among which its mock antique of twelve Grecian pillars in

iron, stands beautifully conspicuous, and beyond the broad estuary, or Firth of the river Forth, with the islands of Inch Keith, the Bass Rock, and the Isle of May, stretching away to the eastward towards the German Ocean. Across the Firth is the county of Fife; and far away to the north-west the mountain summits of Perth, Stirling, and Dumbartonshire, among which Ben Lomond and Ben Ledi rear their summits to the clouds. To the south lie the three Lothians, famous not alone for picturesque beauty, but for a perfection of scientific agriculture; surpassable, perhaps, but as yet unequalled in any portion of the world. Almost immediately under foot, distant about two miles southwards, is Blackford Hill, which Scott has commemorated in Marmion, as when looking from it towards Edinburgh, he sees the glorious landscape spread before his sight, and beholds his "own romantic town," where, if canonisation were to the taste, and accorded with the faith of our days, he would certainly be enrolled among the noble company of the saints.

From Edinburgh is no long distance to the Tweed. There are several routes, each equally picturesque; and it is one of the advantages of Scottish travel to a well-read stranger that you cannot go wrong, turn which way you will. My companion, with a strong and all-pervading reverence and love for Sir Walter Scott, decides to go to Melrose and Abbotsford. We go, accordingly. We pass on the rail many famous spots, for the country is thickly strewn with history and romance. Among others must be cited Dalkeith, Dalhousie, and Cockpen. The last mentioned is the scene of the immortal ballad, in which the elderly laird, whose mind is too much taken up with affairs of the state to be able to afford much time for wooing, puts on his wig and cocked-hat, girds on his sword, and mounted on his nag, proceeds to pay court to the thrifty and industrious Mistress Jean, the daughter of the neighbouring Laird of Clavern Hall Lee, "a penniless lass with a long pedigree." How he is discomfited, to the sore surprise of the business-like wooer, who, knowing his wealth in kyne and sheep and broad acres, thinks this particular—perhaps over particular—lass, or indeed any other, must "be daft to refuse the Laird o' Cockpen," is exeellently well told in the ballad.

Passing Newbattle Abbey, the seat of Lord Lothian, and the modern castle of Dalhousie, the seat of the marquis of that name, we catch glimpses of two very different buildings, strongholds of the days of Border feud and chivalry, when every great noble was his own king, lawgiver, and judge; and did as seemed good in his own eyes, until somebody stronger than himself arose to contest the point with him. The first of these that comes in sight is Borthwick Castle, built in 1430, with a solidity that would have enabled it to brave the inroads of time and the elements for a thousand years. It was to this place that Bothwell carried Mary after their ill-omened marriage. It was here, too, that a plot was afterwards laid by the Scottish nobles under the Earl of Morton, to seize upon the royal couple. Mary, when alone in the castle with only six or seven retainers, received a friendly hint of the conspiracy, only just in time to escape in the disguise of a page, and join her husband by a bypath over the hills at Blackcastle. Thence they made their way to Dunbar, and one of the many sensational episodes of the Scottish Revolution was played out, to be followed by other acts of the mighty drama, infinitely more startling, of which to poor Mary the climax was a weary captivity and the headsman's block. The castle suffered greatly at a later period from the guns of Oliver Cromwell, but still stands, venerable and strong in ruin, a remembrance of the bad old times departed, when might, not right, was king of men; and when the chaotic forces of oppression and resistance, force and fraud, light and darkness, superstition and free inquiry, were all struggling, fusing, fermenting, fizzing, cracking, bursting, exploding, and finally assimilating into that great Cosmos of rational liberty which Scotland and England alike enjoy, and in the accomplishment of which Scotland most indisputably had her full share. Before parting with Borthwick Castle, let me note that in the "manse," or parsonage, as it would be called in England, was born the historian Robertson, a writer whose works, though somewhat out of date in our day, are models of classical English.

Crichton Castle, two miles further south, has memories of its own, which to the readers of Marmion will be pleasantly familiar. It dates from the time of James the Second (of Scotland), having been built by Sir William Crichton, guardian of that monarch, and chancellor of the kingdom. It contains the remains of a dungeon, remarkable for its name of the Massie More, suggesting, as it is very similar in form, structure, and arrangement, some

affinity with the Mazza Morras—or great dungeons of Spain. Crichton stands on the banks of the little river Tyne, that falls into the Firth of Forth at Tyningham. This fortress in its time has had many masters, among others the Earl of Bothwell, at whose attainder it fell to the Scotts of Harden, now represented by the Dukes of Buccleuch. From them it passed into other hands, almost equally celebrated in Border strife. The story of Lord Marmion's temporary sojourn in the castle occupies a considerable portion of the fourth canto of Sir Walter's poem, though, perhaps, the most interesting passage in it is that which describes the existing state of the ruin, and the pleasure which the poet himself took in surveying its "turrets rude" and "tottered keep," and in tracing the mystic sense of its mouldering shields, and of its scutcheons of honour and pretence, quartered in heraldic fashion.

As we roll along, the scene begins to lose its sylvan character, and the bare green hills, dotted with sheep and cattle, give proof of rich pasturage; of milk, of butter, of wool, and of hides. The little shallow stream, that so frequently glimmers in the sunshine as we pass, and which in winter claims to be and acts the part of a veritable mountain torrent, is the Gala, renowned in Scottish song for "the braw lads that live upon its braes, and that tread o'er the moss among the heather," when they go a wooing the equally braw lasses. The song is of no merit; even Robert Burns could make nothing of it in the way of improvement; but the air to which it is wedded is divine, and particularly took the fancy of the great composer Haydn, who wrote upon a copy of it, in his imperfect English, "This is one Dr. Haydn favourite song." The Gala runs a very tortuous course, meandering almost as capriciously as the Forth, and after feeding the busy cloth mills of the thriving town of Galashiels, discharges itself into the Tweed near Abbotsford. The vale of the Gala was formerly called Woedale, or the Vale of Woe, in modern times corrupted into Wedale. Stow-in-Wedale is the name of a village near the boundary line between Selkirkshire and the Lothians, which was formerly the residence of the bishops and archbishops of St. Andrews, in the days before Scotland abjured prelacy. Beyond Stow is the pleasant castle on the hill, called Torsonce, from the Gaelic Tor-sonas, the "tower of good luck."

As we approach Galashiels the face of the country shows more and more the traces of wealth and comfort, and Galashiels itself, with its tall chimneys, or "lang lums," explains at a glance that a prosperous manufacture is carried on in this cosey nest among the hills. Here upwards of a million of pounds of wool are annually converted into the beautiful fabric known to trade as "Tweeds," for men's attire, and into tartan and other shawls, rivalling those of Paisley, for the comfort and adornment of the ladies, not only of Scotland, but of every part of the civilised world. There is a population of between six thousand and seven thousand, continually increasing. Most of the mills are worked by the abundant water-power afforded by the Gala, and a few remote from the river by steam. Manufacturing towns are seldom picturesque; but Galashiels is a notable exception.

At Bridgend, below Galashiels, runs down into the Gala a burn, which ought to be dear to all lovers of romance, who remember the adventures of Father Philip with the White Lady of Avenel. The burn is the scene of that famous, but to Father Philip most bewildering chant, Merrily swim we, the Moon shines bright. From this point we soon rattle into Melrose, which Scott's genius has converted into a kind of Mecca for his literary worshippers. As we are of the number for the nonce, we look with becoming reverence upon the shrine, and sally forth, duly refreshed, to make our pilgrimage. There is little of note in Melrose itself, the Kennaquhair, or Don't know Where, of the novel; but the Abbey, per se, were there nothing beside to visit, would be worth a long journey to any pilgrim of the right sort, with the proper amount of antiquarian and poetical lore to excite his imagination and his memory. Sir Walter has recorded, in a well-known passage, that any one who would "visit fair Melrose aright, should visit it by the pale moonlight," a recommendation which, according to the old seneschal or guide who did the honours of Melrose thirty years ago, and long before the advent of the bonnie lassie who now fills his place, he did not himself think worthy of observance. "Sir Walter," he used to say, "never visited Melrose by moonlight, unless it were the outside of it. I can testify that he never got in, for I had the keys, and he never either asked for them or had them." But that signifies nothing. Genius is not obliged to look at everything which it portrays; and if it cannot invent,

or see what might be, and what is, without looking at it, it is not genius at all, but handicraft and workmanship—mere manufacture, without an inner and living spirit. Melrose Abbey, where the monks made and ate good kale, "on Fridays when they fasted," and who never were at a loss for good wine and ale, as long as their neighbours had any which they could beg, borrow, or steal, has so often been described, as to render it difficult for any new foot to go over the well-worn ground, and find a novelty. What impressed me most amid the beauties of the symmetrical ruin (pity that men's evil passions should make ruins of such places, before time and "decay's effacing fingers," are ready for the work), was the fragment of stone over the spot where was, and some say is, deposited the heart of the great Robert Bruce;—next to Wallace, the hero most heroic in all the magnificent muster-roll of the worthies of Scotland. There is nothing to guard the spot from the foot of the passing traveller, nothing even to draw his attention to the place; no "siste viator, heroem calcas!" inscribed upon the wall, or elsewhere, to warn him not to desecrate the dust of the great departed. The body of Bruce is buried in the church of Dunfermline; the whole church is his monument, with its beautiful square tower, and the words, "Robert Bruce, King of Scotland," tastefully intermingled with the delicate stone tracery at the top; but the heart found a resting-place here in Melrose Abbey, when the attempt of Sir James Douglas to transport, it to the Holy Land was interrupted, and, for all that any one appears to know to the contrary, prevented. The guide-books say, "that here was deposited, in its final resting-place, the heart of Robert Bruce, brought back from Spain by Sir William Keith, after the ineffectual attempt made by James, Lord Douglas, to carry it to Jerusalem." Scott says that Bruce's heart, "the flower, the soul of Bannockburn,"

> Beneath that ugly, shapeless stone,
> Unhonoured, nameless, lies alone.

Is this the fact? If it be, it is surely not honourable to Scotland that "an ugly, shapeless stone," as Sir Walter truly calls it, without a fence or protection of any kind, and without the slightest inscription to attract the attention of the tourist and the traveller to the spot, should remain subject to the wear and tear of the feet of the irreverent, the unthinking, or the ignorant.

It has for three centuries and upwards been the fashion to underrate the services rendered to humanity and civilisation in the lawless middle ages by the monks, to laugh at their superabundant love of good cheer, to sneer at their hypocritical pretence of virtue and sobriety, and to represent them as the lazy drones who lived upon the hard work of better people. But all this is wrong. The monks were not lazy. They wrought hard; were good farmers, good gardeners, good shepherds, good brewers, good vintagers, good artists, good architects, ripe scholars, and, in the main, devoted the wealth which their astuteness and rapacity may have first acquired, but which their skill and industry developed and augmented, to very noble purposes. They fed the hungry, they clad the naked, they sheltered the homeless, they held their heads high in the presence of the great and mighty of the earth, and taught them that "a man was a man for a' that," and that the poorest and the meanest were the children of the Church and of God, as much as the wealthiest and haughtiest, and dared them, on penalty of future wrath in this world and in the next, to act the part of wolves and worry the sheep-folds of the Almighty. I who write am no Romanist, no upholder of the faith, as interpreted by the venerable pope and his cardinals, who dwell, or recently dwelt, at Rome; but I am Catholic enough, in a wider and a nobler sense of the word, to admit with gratitude the immense good that was done, when such good was sorely needed, by the monks of the middle ages. Every monastery in those days was an oasis of peace in a desert of savagery. There may have been human passions and human frailties at work in the oases—and where are they ever quiescent but in the tomb? — but all the play and fermentation of the passions, violent as they may (or as they may not) have been, were subordinated to the great task which the monks set themselves of succouring the poor, refining the manners and improving the behaviour of the rich, and in keeping alight the lamp, not alone of the Gospel, as they understood it, but the lesser lamp of secular learning. They performed, to a great extent, the part now performed by the press in the days when there was no press; and for that alone they merit the respectful, if not the grateful, mention of posterity.

From Melrose to Abbotsford is a short drive of two miles, and we take in our way the old Border town or Peel of Darnick, which has been in the possession of the family of the Heitons for four hundred

years. It is almost, if not the very last of its compeers, and in a perfect state of preservation. The old Border chieftains built for security rather than for ease; and Darnick Peel has lost its security —which no one in our day would endanger—and has gained in comfort by the modernisation of some of its apartments. But the modernisation has not been carried so far as to destroy the old characteristics of the feudal period; and the Heitons of to-day can dine in the same banqueting-hall which sufficed for their ancestors, without rushing, like Border warriors and reivers in old days, to the Border and beyond it, in search of the fat cattle and sheep of the Englishers. The new lairds of Darnick—new, though of the old race—pay their butchers' bills, and their good wives no longer serve up a pair of spurs as the dish of honour at the table, to tell them that the larder is empty, and that they must boot and saddle, and away into Northumberland, before she can serve them another dinner. Darnick tower is for the present in good and reverential hands, and remains an almost unique specimen of a civilisation—if such it can be called—that has long since passed away.

The Tweed, as we approach Abbotsford, is neither very wide nor very deep. But this is a summer fact, that ceases to be a fact, when the wintry rains make havoc on its bed and banks. At such times it runs, not only a deep and broad, but a very rapid and, as the Scotch would say, "a drumly" river. The Tweed, as everybody ought to know, forms, but for a very few miles of its course, the boundary between England and Scotland; and at Abbotsford it is no boundary at all. There are parts of Scotland south as well as north of the Tweed, so that a man may be born on what is called the English side of that river without being an Englishman at all. The first view of Abbotsford is not cheerful. It lies low upon the river bank, and receives as little of the genial sunshine as if the situation of the house had been expressly chosen to exclude it. Abbotsford has been called "a romance in stone and lime;" but the romance lies in its history, and that of the great man who built and furnished it, and all but ruined himself in the effort, rather than in itself, or in any beauty connected with it. The original name of the farm and the lands adjoining, for which Scott gave a price far beyond the value, was Cartley Hole. It was a bare place at the best; and at the time of his death there was not a tree growing upon it that he himself had not planted. The woods are now thriving and luxuriant, and Abbotsford sleeps in a shady nest, somewhat gloomy and disappointing, it must be confessed, when seen from the exterior, but warm and snug within, and full of tender and ennobling memories of its founder.

The interior of Abbotsford is an interesting but a mournful sight; and most mournful of all, the study where his teeming brain, his gentle heart, and his industrious hand produced his best novels; the laboratory of the literary alchemist, where he turned inferior metal into gold; the sanctum of a genius as copious as it was beneficent. Here is the cosey arm-chair in which he sat, here are the books of reference which he consulted, the pictures on the wall on which his eyes were accustomed to dwell, and more mournful than all, because to some extent painful (at least they were so to me), the clothes and the hat that he usually wore, still as fresh as in the time—fifty years agone, or nearly—when, his literary work done for the day, he received his friends at luncheon, or roamed through the comparative wilderness, which it was his dearest wish to convert into an earthly paradise. I desired to sit in the great novelist's chair; but the attendant who showed the rooms, a buxom and well-behaved Scottish lass, politely but very firmly refused permission, on the ground that she had been expressly forbidden to grant the privilege to anybody. "The chair," she said, "would soon be worn out, if every one who came here was allowed to sit in it." I respected her orders, but I sat in the chair nevertheless, not simply with the consent and approval, but at the request of the owner of Abbotsford, and the present representative of Sir Walter. Our party enjoyed, moreover, the additional privilege of inspecting many interesting and valuable relics of the departed, which are kept carefully under lock and key, and are not shown to the mass of tourists. For this courtesy I was thankful then—and am thankful now—and carried away from the place a more grateful sense of the benignity of Scott's genius, and a higher respect for his character, than I entertained when I first entered, though even then it would have been difficult to persuade me that my admiration could have been increased, or my love made greater.

For some time before approaching Melrose or Abbotsford, the Eildon Hills, with their picturesque triple summits, have been in sight. These hills are associated

with the name of another Scott and another "Wizard of the North," a wizard supposed to have been one in the literal rather than in the complimentary acceptation of the word. Every reader of the Lay of the Last Minstrel, and of Scottish legendary poetry, is familiar with the traditional character of Michael, or Sir Michael Scott, who was really one of the most learned men of the thirteenth century, much too learned for the comprehension of his vulgar countrymen, or of any of his contemporaries, except the monks of Melrose. One of these monks, it may be remembered, tells Sir William of Deloraine, that it was his fortune in a far foreign clime to meet "that wondrous wizard," who by a wave of his wand at Salamanca, could cause the bells to ring in the Cathedral of Notre Dame at Paris, and who, moreover, had taught him the mystic words by which he was enabled to cleave the Eildon Hills in three, which words to repeat would be a fearful sin, and which, even to think of, without repeating, required a treble penance. The tradition of the country records that Sir Michael was once upon a time much embarrassed by a spirit, for whom he was under the necessity of finding constant employment, under the penalty of being torn to pieces by him. He commanded him to build a cauld, or dam-head, across the Tweed at Kelso. The job was accomplished in one night; and still remains, says Sir Walter, to do honour to the skill of its infernal architect. Sir Michael next ordered the pertinacious and over-industrious fiend to split the highest summit of the Eildon Hill into three peaks. This work he also performed in one night in the deftest manner. The wizard was for a moment puzzled by the perilous zeal of his servitor. "Make me a mile of rope out of the sea-sand," he said at last; and the demon set to work forthwith, and remained working at the impossible task to the end of Sir Michael's life, thus adding another to the many existing proofs in song and story, that it is, as Coleridge says, "very easy to circumvent the devil." Sir Michael was an astronomer, and like most of the students of the stars in his day, an astrologer also; which explains the reason why the appellation of a wizard was fastened upon him. One tradition records that he and his magic books are buried in Melrose Abbey; another, that he was interred in Cumberland.

Among the spots celebrated in Scottish romance in the near vicinity of Abbotsford and Melrose, are "Cowden Knowes," and "Ercildoune," where lived Thomas the Rhymer. Every Scottish lad and lass used to know, and many of them to sing, the tender pastoral song, Oh, the Broom, the Broom, the bonnie bonnie Broom, the broom of the Cowden Knowes; but in our time, the more's the pity, Scottish songs have grown somewhat obsolete, except among the peasantry, in whose hearts and on whose lips they still flourish. Thomas the Rhymer appears to have been a contemporary of Sir Michael Scott, and his name, after the lapse of more than five hundred years, is still mentioned with veneration by his countrymen. He was known both as a prophet and a poet, which in fact all true poets are and ought to be. His poetry has gone down into oblivion: but some of his prophecies, quoted by later writers, and preserved in tradition among the country people, are still current. Ercildoune, or Earlston, is a little village on the Leader, two miles above its junction with the Tweed. "The popular tale of the neighbourhood relates," says Sir Walter in a note to his contributions to the Border Minstrelsy, "that Thomas was carried off at an early age to Fairy Land, where he acquired all the knowledge which afterwards made him famous. After seven years' residence he was permitted to return to the earth to enlighten and astonish the world by his prophetic powers; still, however, being bound to return to his royal mistress (the Queen of the Fairies), whenever she should intimate her pleasure. Accordingly, while Thomas was making merry with his friends in the Tower of Ercildoune, a person came running in with fear and astonishment, and told that a hart and hind had left the neighbouring forest, and were composedly and slowly parading the street of the village. The poet arose instantly, and followed the animals to the forest, whence he was never seen to return. According to the popular belief he still 'drees his weird' (undergoes his doom) in Fairy Land, and is expected, at some future day, to revisit the earth."

THE OMNIBUS DINNER.

It does not seem a very opportune time now to talk of Paris and dining in the same breath. Nevertheless, I, an old habitué of Paris, relegated by the exigencies of a state of siege to this side of the Channel, cannot help wondering—as I sit in London dining-rooms, and see mountainous

joints of all kinds wheeled in colossal state from table to table, and served out with a bounteous carving-knife, as though the supply of beef and mutton were illimitable —what sort of repast is now being served up at the various places of prandial resort which I was wont at one time or another to frequent in the French metropolis; for there are few kinds of them which I have not visited at one time or another. A suspicion of horseflesh always haunted me, perhaps unjustly, at some of the cheapar restaurants in Paris; but that suspicion must now be turned into stern reality, not only at these, but at such places as Vachette's and Vefours, and what may be the state of mind of the chefs de cuisine at the high-priced restaurants in Paris is really a curious subject for speculation. How do they take the siege? Do they take to the cooking of horseflesh in ragoûts, emincés, and cheval à la mode without a tinge of disgust? Does patriotism spur in them the genius of invention to unprecedented efforts of ingenuity, and enable them to astound their accustomed and besieged diners with new triumphs of the culinary art over rebellious materials; and will they, as the siege progresses, and as the unhappy inhabitants are obliged to descend to still lower orders of quadrupeds, frightful to enumerate, continue to deliver desperate battle with all the resources of Ude and Vattel, and their own to boot, against the ungrateful viands, and extend to unheard-of limits the conquests of the casserole? Every one has heard of the delicious sauce of legendary fame whose eulogies a Frenchman pronounced in saying "avec cette sauce on mangerait son propre père," and it may be that some inventive genius of the white cap, jacket, and apron may produce a sauce with which we might eat anything except the granite of the Parisian quays and bridges. In the siege of Paris by Henry the Fourth, leather became at last an object eagerly sought for comestible purposes, and it may, alas! be so again; and, if such be the case, as the supply of ready-made boots and shoes in Paris always seemed to be immeasurable, there will be an immense deal of work both for cook and client before they get through the store in hand. Fancy dining at the Café Anglais off cuir de Russie à la sauce Tartare, or a bottine en chevreau sauce piquante! And the countless restaurants at two francs at the Palais Royal, how do they endure the siege? It was only possible for them to keep up their establishments, even in ordinary times, by early attendance at the halles, and by buying en masse large heaps of supplies from the provinces. What are they doing at the innumerable crémeries and laiteries, which used to be found in every street in Paris, and where the workman could get his bowl of café au lait and his hunch of bread in the morning for about four sous? All the newspaper correspondents have yet told us about the distribution of food in Paris during the siege relates to the well-to-do people who can pay for their viands, even at the advanced prices; but how fares it with the artisan of the Faubourg Saint Antoine and La Villette, whose work is stopped, and who has no money to go to market with?

In the siege we have before mentioned —that of Paris by Henry the Fourth— huge caldrons were established in the streets, from which the poor came and got helped indiscriminately to the broth and the substances of which it was made. The broth was made of beef first of all; when the beef was used up they descended to horseflesh; when the horses were used up they descended to asses; and when the asses were used up, they came down, not only to dogs and cats, but to vermin of all kinds, stewed down with such herbs as were to be gathered about the ramparts and in the streets. Then they made broth of tallow-grease and leather, as we said, new and old; but even then the broth grew thinner and thinner, and of course more nauseous every day, till at last the poor were found dying about the streets, one hundred, one hundred and fifty, and two hundred at a time. Yet it may be said that never were the inhabitants of any city ever put upon short allowance, who so well knew how to make the most of what they had as the Parisians. Some of the results of their dexterous management in this way have often appeared to me marvellous, and after paying we always had a sense of having dined gratuitously at the expense of our host. On looking back over my past experiences in this line, none ever struck me as more remarkable than those I occasionally made at certain dining-places in Paris which we will call, for the sake of distinction, the "omnibus dinner," and to one of which I once introduced my friend Featherwing.

Featherwing and I had made various gastronomic explorations in Paris, but we had never yet explored the omnibus dinners together. We had investigated the hazard à la fourchette, where you dig with a big

fork into a pot, and bring out what you can with one dive for a sou, and bestowed the results of our winnings on little gamins, waiting outside the door. We had even once really dined, among a mass of blouses, at a place where a big man with his shirt-sleeves turned up, and with bare arms, wielded by turns the fork and the knife and the ladle, over a large row of bright smoking saucepans before him, and exhorted his customers to the attack of his viands with the cries: "Il y à du bœuf, messieurs, Il y du mouton rôti, il y à des haricots blancs, et mess-ieurs il y à du maccar-r-r-oni." We had dined more than once at Duval's Etablissements de Bouillon, where you dine on little marble tables without tablecloths, and where you are waited upon by trim serving-maids in uniforms of clean white caps, clean aprons, and brown stuff dresses; where the soup is excellent, and the food plain and good; and where you may dine for about thirty sous if your appetite be small; but where, alas! if it be large, your dinner will cost you as much as at a moderately high-priced restaurant. We had dined together at pretty nearly all the restaurants à prix fixe; and as for all the restaurants of the Boulevards and the Palais Royal, we had dined at the greater part of these until we knew the Christian names of all the waiters, and the proprietor would sometimes shake us by the hand. Well, to-day our fate was to go together for an omnibus dinner.

Why do I call it the "omnibus dinner?" for this is a private appellation of my own, the dinner in question being known by the name of Maison Sophie, Maison Blond, &c., in the Rue de Mail, Faubourg Montmartre, and other places. This fancy term came into the head of a friend of mine who happened to go with me to one of them, and is apt enough, as the dining takes place at a number of tables in a large room, all of the same size, and all laid out in the same way. The guests drop in one by one, or by twos and threes, in desultory fashion, at any time between about half-past five and eight, and take their places at any of the tables until it is filled up. And when it is complete, gastronomic motion commences for that table, just as an omnibus starts when it is full. The stream of incoming diners continues to flow in, and to go on filling tables two, three, four, five, and six, till all are complete, and each table starts as soon as its places are all occupied. As soon as table number one has come to an end of its dining process, the diners get up and leave, and a band of handy maidens come swiftly down upon it, remove plates, and dishes, and napkins, and all signs of the finished repast, and in the twinkling of an eye table number one stands forth arrayed again in snowy linen, and provided with fresh napkins, clean plates, clean knives and forks, and spoons. The baskets of bread are replenished, one fresh pint bottle of red wine is put down by each plate, the hors d'œuvres, radishes, olives, cucumbers, &c., are renewed, and table number one wears again a virgin aspect for a few moments, as though it had been innocent of diners as yet for the day.

When Featherwing and I entered on this occasion, a lady, who decidedly ought to command a very high figure in the way of remuneration on any stage where a walking duchess may be required, bowed us a welcome, and conducted us elegantly to table number three, which was in process of filling up. Table number one, I observed, was busily engaged with the rôti, while table number two was well on with its vegetables. Our arrival at table number three was evidently a relief to a gentleman in front of whom we took our places—a faint gleam of satisfaction, as of summer lightning, ran over his features; he was manifestly a-hungered, and wanted to begin. I think he noticed my eye upon him, however, for when the next addition was made to our party, he took a paper out of his pocket and tried to read, as though the matter did not affect him. However, his affectation of unconcern did not last long, for, before the next arrival, he dropped his paper, leaned forward and bravely took some radishes and eat them, looking us in the face. His movement was contagious, and single assaults were made on the hors d'œuvres at other parts of the table, till such time as table number three was complete. A neat-handed Phyllis came and surveyed us, just like an omnibus conductor does his insides; she saw we were complete, then retired towards the kitchen regions, and reappeared like an Angel of Plenty, bearing, not a cornucopia, but a soup tureen in her hands. Our Angel of Plenty had a Grecian profile, with blue eyes, and blonde hair, turned back something after the fashion of old Greek statues. She put down the tureen at a vacant place at the side and in the middle of the table, which is reserved between two chairs for the dispensing of the viands, and then said interrogatively to Featherwing, who happened to be next her, "Monsieur,

foulez-fous du botage?" Featherwing, an impudent fellow, replied at once, "Un beu, Mademoiselle Gretchen, s'il fous plait."

"Alsace, of course," he said to me. "I see half the serving-girls here are Alsatians, and most likely all Gretchens."

Gretchen showed some white teeth as she passed Featherwing his soup, and showed still more of them as Featherwing whispered something to her in a confidential tone; but Gretchen was too much bent upon business to listen to Featherwing's nonsense; she passed the soup right and left, and over the way, sometimes dodging behind the chairs and plumping down the soup before you, then back to the ladle and the tureen, till the tureen was a mere "marine" of a soup tureen, and then she caught it up and took it away, not, however, without saying, before she left, "Messieurs, foulez-fous encore du botage," and not without giving a look at Featherwing, with a grasp at the ladle, as though she would like to hit him with it, but not very hard.

"They put the girls on for the soup, and the vegetables, and the dessert," I said to Featherwing, "but the proprietor himself carves the bœuf and the rôti. Here's the bœuf brought by another damsel. I hope you like bœuf in the pot au feu form—the pot au feu, you know——"

"Stop," said Featherwing. "I know what you are going to say. What choucroute and sausages are to the German, what the puchero is to the Spaniard, what the polenta is to the Milanese, what maccaroni is to the Neapolitan, what the couscoussou is to the Arab, is the pot au feu to the Frenchman."

"I wasn't going to say all that," I replied. "I was merely going to say it is the French national dish."

"And a very good dish it is, too," said Featherwing. "And as for economy, why it is the cheapest thing going. I'd back myself, too, to make pot au feu against anybody but a Norman paysanne. Ah, if our people knew how to make it, they'd save a lot of money; but it isn't so easy to make as you think."

"No," I said, "the true pot au feu is the product of a whole day's care and watchfulness on the part of a good housewife. She must begin early in the morning by slicing her vegetables, which——"

"Come" he said, "you are going to give me an article by Timothy Trim, in the Petit Journal, on the pot au feu. I know it; but the great secret is, as he says, never——"

"To let it boil," I said.

"Confound it," he said, "leave the pot au feu to me, it is my property. I have half a mind to make myself the apostle of the pot au feu among our people, who are still heathens in the way of cookery, with their barbarous broilings, and bakings, and roastings, and dropping half their food in the fire, or steaming it out in ovens. I often think of buying a saucepan and a big knife and a ladle, going about in a cook's white cap and apron and jacket, and giving lectures during the summer months on all the village greens in England by turns—lectures on or over the pot au feu."

"Do it, Featherwing," I said, "and the idlest man of his age may do his country more service than half a parliament of busybodies."

By this time the bouilli was placed before us, and, after a gustatory essay, Featherwing's verdict was, "Not so bad." When the next course came on, which consisted of vegetables, sorrel with hard-boiled eggs, and asparagus, the sorrel gave Featherwing another opportunity of dilating on the benighted state of the British mind with respect to cooking.

"Sorrel," said Featherwing, "with an œuf à la coq hard boiled, beaten up like this, is a dish which I really believe has never yet been eaten in England; and as for mussels—why, when I asked Bloker one day, the stockbroker's son, to try them at Vachette's, he shuddered as if I had asked him to try a dish of lobworms! I, however, insisted on having them for myself, and tried to coax Bloker to try one on the end of a fork, but he turned pale, so I was obliged nearly to finish the whole dish myself, to prove to him that I liked them, but I fear the example was lost upon him."

After this came on the rôti, filet de bœuf or mutton, carved from the joints before us, with crisp, clean, well-dressed salad of endive and lettuce. The salad gave Featherwing another opportunity of touching on the merits of mallows and dandelion, unknown, he averred, in the form of salad, to the English public. When the rôti was disposed of, a dark-haired, pretty-looking girl, whom one or two habitués of the place addressed as Justine, placed the dessert on the table. There were bowls of strawberries, cream, preserves of cherries, apricots, and cheese. While Justine dispensed these dainties, the mistress of the house came round and collected the fares.

"How much?" said Featherwing.

"Thirty-six sous," said I.

"What, wine included?"

"Yes."

"Why, it is just eighteen-pence. Well, I do believe you could not dine so well anywhere else in Europe for the money?"

"And yet," said I, "they say they make more money at these places than at the high-priced restaurants. It is the number."

"And the management," he added.

As we went out we observed the tenants of tables one and two had been entirely replaced since we came in; and tables four, five, and six, and others, were all full, while the deck was being rapidly cleared at the scene of our operations. A bow from the duchess, and we go down-stairs.

Such was the omnibus dinner! How has it fared during the siege?

MARKED FOR THE KNIFE.

About two years before the startling revelations respecting the dissecting trade in Edinburgh had placed the legal supply of "subjects" upon its present satisfactory footing, there occurred to my elder brother, at that time a delicate boy of about fourteen, a singular adventure, involving such a shock to his nerves as, the doctors believed, very much hastened his death, which occurred in less than a year after it.

We then resided in a large white house, with a row of poplars in front, close to one of our canals. Within a stone's throw of our hall-door was a lock and a lock-house, and then followed, in the London direction, one of the longest and most solitary levels to be met with in the United Kingdom.

The canal, at a point about seventy yards from the lock, makes a slight deflection. The consequence is, that neither the lock nor our house are visible from the long, straight level that follows, and which is closely fenced between tall hedges and old trees.

My brother had been ordered walking exercise, and my father generally appointed the path beside the level I have described for his walk. The traffic, never very active, was, at that time, in a state little better than extinct. Not more than two or three boats passed in a day, and chiefly owing to its perfect quietude it had been chosen for the walk of our solitary invalid.

It was now summer, and the hour of his daily walk was from five to seven; the earlier hours of the afternoon being pronounced too hot for exercise.

On the evening in question, he set out alone. His usual walk was to a point two miles up the level, where there was a stone block, on which he used to sit and rest a little before setting out for home.

While he was taking his ease on this stone bench, and listlessly looking up and down the long and deserted reach of water, there emerged, a few hundred yards to his left, from a sequestered path, a singular figure, which approached slowly and passed him by, with only the narrow tow-path between them. It was moving in the direction of our home, and was that of an emaciated man, with a complexion dark as very old box-wood, limping, as it seemed, painfully, very much stooped, and with a big angular hump upon his back. His hair was long and sooty black, he had prominent dark eyes, under thick black brows, and his face and chin were stubbled with a week's growth of beard. He was leaning heavily on a long stick, and walked with a kind of hitch, which resembled a spasm, and gave one the idea that each step was accompanied by a separate sting of pain.

The face of this man expressed extreme weakness and suffering, and might almost be that of a man dragging himself away, with a mortal wound, to some spot where he might lie down and die in quiet.

He had a long and heavy bottle-green coat, which had grown to be, indeed, a coat of many colours, for over the threadbare and greasy ground it was overlaid, with fantastic and extraordinary industry, with a tesselation of patches, of every imaginable colour, in which yellow, and red, and blue, and black were discernible, under a varnish of grease, and toned with a variety of dirt; and even these patches were patched again, and had broken here and there into rents and fissures, and bunches of shreds and tatters. Round his body was buckled a broad discoloured leathern strap, and he wore a wide-leafed felt hat, with a rather conical crown, brown and grimed by time and ill-treatment.

This figure, with long gaiters of rabbit-skin, and shapeless "brogues," limped past my brother without taking the slightest notice of him, and uttering now and then a short groan, as if of suppressed pain, he excited the wonder, and in some degree the compassion of the boy.

He watched the progress of this man, who was moving with great difficulty, and with many halts, in the direction of our home. It was not until he had got on

nearly a quarter of a mile, that my brother got up, now quite rested, to follow in the same direction.

As this strange, crooked man with the stick got on, he appeared to grow more and more exhausted, and at length he tottered into a little recess at the edge of the path, and fell helplessly on his side among the bushes.

The boy quickened his pace, and as he approached the spot, he passed the head of a narrow lane, in which he saw a donkey and cart standing. The cart had in it, upon some straw, a piece of old carpet, from under which emerged some folds of coarse canvas, like a part of an old sack, but he could not see any one in charge of this conveyance, though, being anxious to obtain help, he called repeatedly.

Despairing of succour, he went on, and reached the point where he had seen the man fall. Here he found him. He had crept a little further in among the bushes. He was supporting himself feebly on the ground upon his elbow, his eyes turned up as if he were on the point of swooning, and he moaned faintly.

The boy's courage almost failed him; but the sick man seemed to perceive him, turned his eyes upon him imploringly, and extending his hand toward him, so evidently signalled for aid, that my brother could not help drawing near.

The fainting man then told him, in a whisper, that if he would take his hand and draw him gently toward him, he would perhaps be able to turn himself a little, to his great relief.

My brother did give him his hand accordingly, and the fainting man, instead of taking it, seized his arm above the elbow, with a gigantic hand, in a grip like a vice, and jerking him under, sprang over him, thrusting his other arm round and beneath him, so as to pinion him fast. He had carried in his hand the end of the belt which he had removed from around his own body while waiting for his prey, and with a dexterity acquired, no doubt, by long practice, in a moment, with the now disengaged hand, he drew it and buckled it round the boy's arms and body at a single jerk, with a pressure so powerful that he could scarcely breathe, much less disengage his arms.

In another moment, with his knee on the boy's chest, and one broad hand placed right across his mouth so as to stifle his screams effectually, he hitched round what had seemed to be his hump, but what proved to be, in fact, a bundle, from which, with the other hand, he took out, with the quickness and neatness of a skilled manipulator, two things; one a sort of cushion about eight inches square, covered with chamois-leather—I have that horrible relic, no doubt intended to aid in the process of suffocation, still in my possession—the other was the renowned pitch-plaster.

My brother had not an idea what he intended, for the disclosures in Edinburgh had not yet enlightened and terrified people of all ages throughout England.

The miscreant kept his face close to his victim's, with his powerful eyes fixed on his. His dark lean features and long beak, and the thick hair that hung forward like a sooty plumage round it, and the long sinewy neck that arched over my poor brother as he lay at his assailant's mercy, gave him, in the fascinated gaze of the boy, the appearance of a monstrous bird of prey.

I dare say this ghoul had an actual power, such as many men are said to possess, of controlling the springs of action, mental and bodily, by some occult power of the eye. To my brother it seemed that it needed a perpetual and desperate struggle of will to prevent a frightful trance from stealing over him.

For a moment the wretch's hand was slightly raised from the boy's mouth. He intended no doubt at this instant to introduce the pitch-plaster, which was to stop both mouth and nostrils. But my brother, now struggling frantically, uttered two piercing yells, which compelled the murderer to replace his hand before he had accomplished his purpose. He was evidently now transported with fury. Up to this he had been operating as methodically as a spider. He looked so fiendish that my brother fancied he would cut his throat, or otherwise despatch him at the moment.

His plans, however, were different. He had no idea of losing sight of his interests, much less of his safety. No principle of his nefarious trade was better established than the absolute necessity of leaving no trace of actual violence upon the persons of his victims. Even the knee with which he held his prey was padded so carefully, that this young boy's breast did not exhibit the slightest contusion, although for so long under a pressure which held him at the verge of suffocation.

Rapidly, and with more success, the villain again essayed his final sleight. One dreadful yell escaped, and the deadly pitch-plaster was fixed on mouth and nose, and

another sound or respiration became impossible.

The leafy bushes above and about him, the figure, the face of the spectre, began to swim before his eyes. He saw the man, still on his knees, rise with a start and pause, with eyes askance, and his dark hand to his ear. In the next instant he had disappeared.

In his struggles the boy now rolled from the lair in which he had been attacked into the clear light upon the open path, where he lay perfectly insensible.

When consciousness returned, which was not for some minutes, three men were about him, drenching his head with water, and all endeavouring to extract a word of explanation, but for long after he could not speak a syllable, nor, for some time, even hear distinctly what they said.

Not a moment was lost, so soon as he was able to describe what had happened, in directing pursuit, wherever any results were the least likely. All my brother could say as to the point towards which the assassin had directed his flight was that, as his sight failed, he thought, though very indistinctly, he saw him pass away obliquely in the direction of the lane in which he had observed the donkey-cart.

It must have belonged to an accomplice, who was there by arrangement. Everything had been prepared to carry away the body of the poor fellow, which would have been secured in the sack, enveloped in the carpet, and covered with straw, and thus secreted in some lonely lock-up yard, until, at dead of night, it would have been conveyed to the dissecting-room. The boy's hat thrown upon the water would have turned inquiry off the scent, and induced delay.

The strap, still buckled with cruel force about the poor fellow's arms and ribs, the chamois cushion I have mentioned, and the pitch-plaster fixed over the lower part of his face, were the only "properties" of the villain left to indicate his visit.

The cool old assassin had carried off every other trace of his presence, and he and his comrade, taking the donkey-cart with them, had decamped with a celerity, and managed their disguise with an art which, as matters then were, and with a full hour's start, had baffled pursuit.

No doubt with the police force now at our command, the result might have been different. As it was, no clue whatever was discovered; and this was positively marvellous, considering the marked peculiarities of dress and of person that belonged to the culprit. The persons best acquainted with the ways of our criminals at that period were of opinion that the strange details of the dress, the gait, the hair, the complexion, and the distortion of the figure, were parts of an elaborate piece of masquerading.

There was some controversy as to the object of the projected crime. It was not until the terrific exposure at Edinburgh had made all the world horribly familiar with the machinery of that peculiar species of murder that all debate upon the matter ceased, and the pitch-plaster was accepted as conclusive evidence that the body was intended for sale to the surgeons.

No doubt these poachers on a great scale were thoroughly skilled in all the finesse and strategy of their contraband art. The regularity of my poor brother's solitary walk, its favourable hour, and the easy suggestion of drowning as the cause of his disappearance, had all been noted, and the enterprise was, as I have told you, very nearly accomplished, when an unexpected interruption saved him.

My brother was ailing at the time this dreadful attempt was made upon his life. He survived it little more than ten months, and the able physician who attended him referred his death to the awful shock which his system had received.

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THE DOCTOR'S MIXTURE.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER XX. A DEFIANCE.

It had been a troubled morning for Mr. Leader. He was sitting with his daughter complaining a good deal of a bad night which he had passed, pains in the side, &c., when word was brought that Mr. Amos, the London solicitor, was waiting.

Mary's eyes turned on him searchingly, and she stood up saying: "They have not at last persuaded you into this monstrous piece of injustice?"

He answered her testily. "Now don't begin all this worry over again. I declare I am persecuted to death among you all."

"You would not wish to be persecuted by your own conscience. I cannot stand by and see you persuaded into a thing which your own heart is against, and which, on your death-bed, you would regret."

He was silent. Then said: "It is too late now, and must be done. I have given my word about it. Besides, they were most impertinent to me—Cecil and the rest—and he must learn that I am head of this house, and must be treated with respect. After all, there is nothing final in this," he added, earnestly. "I can leave it to him still. I only reserve the power."

"But listen," said Mary, "and this is the last time that I shall protest. I learn now that all this is being done for me, in some way, for this marriage with Lord Seaman, which can never take place. What, then, is the use of such a cruel step——"

"You are going beyond what you are entitled to do. I won't be worried any more—leave me alone!"

How changed he was now! Was it a sense of illness coming on, or the curse of the power of wealth developing in him? Mary Leader saw there was no more to be done. The solicitors came in with their great sheepskins spread out, rustling and crackling on the table, and refusing almost to receive the signatures and the ink which they were to retain so long.

It was not long after this ceremony that Lady Seaman sought him and told him her story. She showed him how important it was for them all that the Doctor should now be kept in good-humour: in short, if his terms were not acceded to, she would really be obliged to leave, and all the pleasant little plans and hopes they had been indulging in would come to nothing.

"Indeed, I think so," said the little man, in a confidential way. "I never found much harm in him; but you see Mrs. Leader has such strong views in this matter. I think—wouldn't it be better to leave it as it is?"

She urged him again and again, but Mr. Leader was in too much awe of his "lady" to be persuaded. He argued with reason that enough had been done for that day. All that could be obtained from him was a promise to talk it over with that dreaded lady. She, however, had retired to her room—was not to be seen, and an attack of her "tantrums" was confidently reckoned upon.

When, however, Katey and Mary were sitting together, the latter charitably trying to give comfort, as she knew that her father, though he had gone thus far, would go no further, and that he was good and just, they were surprised by the sight of Mrs. Leader standing before them.

"Are you accountable," she asked of Katey, "for this new plot of bringing your father into the house—have you set Lady Seaman on this scheme?"

"No," said Katey, calmly. "I know nothing of it."

"Because I have come to tell you that he may now come or go, just as you please. All your joint schemings will do nothing. The estate is your father's, to do as he pleases with; and he shall dispose of it now in a way that will disappoint you all."

"Papa will do nothing unjust or dishonourable," said Mary. "I know him too well! As for me, I shall have no part in it."

Mrs. Leader turned on her with unconcealed triumph. "You shan't be troubled—never fear. That foolish project is at an end. To give you such a fortune would be throwing it away, indeed. Now we shall take care of that, I promise you. Your father and I shall dispose of it. Not one in the family has head, or sense, or capacity. It all rests on me, and shall rest. And you are all perfectly welcome to join your forces, and get all the adventurers in the parish to help you. After this you may take your own course. I shall carry out my plans in spite of you all."

Katey had listened to this malignant proclamation, first with wonder, then with horror, and finally with scorn. She answered promptly:

"No, you shall not, since you threaten us so wickedly. Weak as I am, I am strong enough to protect him and myself. Neither am I afraid of you; and since it is you who have come here to challenge me to this indecent contest, I am ready to accept it. You little know my strength!"

"What! you attempt to speak to me in this way?"

"Yes; but I shall say no more. Neither am I bound to bear more from you. From this time I shall begin, not with 'scheming,' as you are pleased to say, but with open fight. I tell you, I prophesy to you, that you shall not carry out the wicked scheme of plunder that you have announced to us to-night!"

Mrs. Leader was astounded, and somehow felt that her enemy had already gained an advantage. She had not counted on this insolent resistance.

"Take care, don't go too far. As it is, you have finished your stay in this house. I should be a fool to let one who has spoken as you have, remain. You shall go to-morrow—you and your husband."

"No," said Katey, calmly. "That, too, I shall dispute. Mr. Leader will not send him away to-morrow. You may test the rest of the struggle by that one little point."

Mrs. Leader, who had determined to show only a lofty contempt, was betrayed into saying: "We shall see!" This was committing herself to the issue, and was undignified.

Thus that scene ended.

But by dinner-time, when the "assembly call" of a country house sounds, there was again quite a fresh change in Mrs. Leader—with one corresponding in her husband. The latter was more timorous and abject than he had ever been: though that might come of illness of which he had been complaining all through the day. But Mrs. Leader was grown insolent, haughty, and exultant. Over her was an air, as though she said, "The game is now in my hands," and my Lady Seaman, though displeased and cool, wondered not a little at the absence of obsequiousness. Perhaps the servants—notably the lady's-maid—could have told of a scene of more than usual vehemence during the dressing for dinner, when the miserable little "lord of the soil" was hectored, and shrieked at, and driven into a corner. He came out so humiliated and broken, that it really seemed as though he had suffered from some long illness.

At dinner, however, he brightened up a great deal. Miss Jessie took him in hand and prescribed for him, made him tell her fresh stories of Judge Badminton, and deliver the speech of Pender, who "got off" somebody, with such brilliant effect, on that circuit. But it was evident he was not quite well; to all, at least, save the exulting Mrs. Leader. It was, indeed, a stiff, solemn entertainment, for Lady Seaman and her daughters were displeased and angry at the complete frustration of their plans; and though the lady was of the "forager" order, and inclined to settle down at free quarters wherever she could, she had signified her intention of leaving. Katey, but not her husband, was present, and over all there was a sense of restraint. The young lord, in decency, had not gone to dine with his friends in the town, and was sulky. Miss Jessie alone "kept the ball rolling," and with her little flatteries, gradually worked Mr. Leader into great good-humour.

That night she had taken a fancy to know something of astronomy. Where was Charles's-wain? the Great Belt, or was that the name? She would give the world to know something about these things.

When the gentlemen had gone up to

"join" the ladies after dinner, and had sat in their little council for a short time, suddenly Mr. Leader appeared, muffled in a great-coat and comforter, and, in a shy, awkward way, said: "If you would like, Miss Jessie, we could go out on the long balcony round the bedrooms, and I could show you the stars and Charles's-wain."

The young lady was in ecstasies at the proposal, and ran to deck herself out in astronomical uniform, glad of the opportunity—as every woman would be—to muffle her head in a becoming hood. Mrs. Leader looked on scornfully; but the little man's head had been rather overset by flattery. So they went up-stairs together out on the balcony, he carrying a telescope.

We now turn to our friend the Doctor, who had returned home, a little agitated with the excitement of the game he was playing. As we have shown, he felt that it was high time it should finish, if he were to win at all, for his enemies were hardly letting him shuffle his cards. He had heard from good authority that Mr. Ridley, his eternal foe, had been grubbing and splashing "in the sewers and gutters," trying to fish up something nasty about his, the Doctor's, life; and it was rumoured he had been absent, engaged in the search.

The Doctor had an 'avannah in his mouth, and a second tumbler of "the inestimable" friend and comforter, D.D., to which, in truth, his persecutions were making him apply much too often, to judge by the permanent wateriness of his eyes. He used to sit a great deal by himself, communing with this sole true friend, "faithful midst faithless found," and repeatedly applying to it for advice and counsel. Indeed, to do the Doctor justice, he missed sadly the quiet influence of his Katey, and he had many twinges about the cruel sacrifice he had made of the fresh, gentle girl, who had been "the light of his house." Polly he had helped to make selfish, and her foolish head was now overflowing with a jumble of brilliant schemes, in which the success of her sister only encouraged her.

Through that night, which was a Saturday night, Doctor Findlater sat on in his study, communing with his D.D. He was thinking and thinking again of what would be the result of his day's battle. "I'll stake my wits on it," he said to himself. "Oh, it was masterly, Peter! A stroke of genius! By the holy Four Courts, I'll bet that I've set them all by the ears, for my lady took the bait like an old pike."

He was expecting some communication, and this made him restless. The hours rolled on, and he then fell asleep. When he awoke he found himself very cold and stiff, and his lamp out, which had made him sleep the longer. A cuckoo-clock in the hall—a quail and cuckoo one rather, birds which divided the labour of sounding the hours between them—gave out its note; two o'clock!"

"Well, well," said the Doctor, "after that!" He found his way up to bed, all shivering, and lay down. But as he was turning round to sleep, he heard the sound of horses' hoofs, which came nearer, and stopped. Then the little wooden gate at the end of the garden flapped—"always as good as a postman's knock," the Doctor would say—to be presently followed by a loud ring. He had started up in a second, and had opened the window. "What is it, what's the matter?"

"Oh, you're the Doctor?"

It was his old enemy the London menial, offensive even at such a crisis.

"Then you're to come up to the Fort. Mr. Leader has been taken suddenly very bad. You'd better not lose a moment!"

"All right," cried the Doctor, drawing in his head. "By the whole Dublin Pharmacopœia, here's events setting in with a full tide!"

CHAPTER XXI. ILLNESS IN THE HOUSE.

As Doctor Findlater described it later, you might have thought there was a ball going on at the castle, so many lights were seen dancing about, up and down. When he entered the hall the servants were hurrying past, and oh, what a triumph! Mrs. Leader herself at the bottom of the stairs, with terror in her face, was the first to greet him.

"Oh, come up quick," she cried. "What are we to do? Go up and lose not a moment."

The Doctor ran up, three steps at a time, remembering with horror that "his throat was open," and that he had forgotten his neck-tie; then into the sick man's room, where there were lights flaring, and many figures.

Mr. Leader was lying on the bed in a sort of collapse, half shrieking with pain, ghastly pale, his face streaming with dew, and, even in that short space of time, shrunk up, through some extraordinary process, to half his size. There was a yellow tinge in his face that gave the Doctor a hint of what was wrong. His daughter Katey, with

hands clasped and tearful eyes, was there, as well as Mary Leader.

"Now," said the Doctor, in a low voice, "clear the room. You're all in the way here. I must be alone with the patient. Have mustard and hot water ready, to any amount, d'ye hear!"

They fluttered away in a frightened drove, and even Mrs. Leader, who had then entered, he coolly turned back, his hands upon her shoulders.

"Now," he said, when alone, and gazing fixedly at the unhappy man, "let us see."

The Doctor had had some rough experience, and knew the rude shapes of disease, such as they show themselves among "the common people" in the hospitals. The gaspings across the chest told him of something "brunkial," and a few adroit questions put to the servant who had been sent for him, as they drove along, brought out what the patient had been doing, namely, making astronomical observations, on a raw night, in the balcony. Further, he recalled his wasted look of late, and feeling the patient over, as if he was some cushion, he came on a tender spot down the side, which produced a shriek. "All right," said Peter aloud, "I know where I am now—congestion generally." In a moment he had rung the bell, had written directions to be sent up to his little surgery; had ordered all sorts of things—hot brandy, which he tasted—hot mustard and pepper, which he took on sheer faith, and set to work. Mrs. Leader, readmitted, looked on. She was in a fever of anxiety.

"No danger? Any danger, Doctor Findlater? Surely there is none?"

The Doctor answered very deliberately: "Much! so much that I hope you have telegraphed for a greater doctor than I am. I won't take the responsibility, I can tell you!"

"You know Doctor Farmer is away?" (Doctor Farmer was the great county doctor, who served nobility and gentry all round.) "But we have sent for Doctor Speed, our London physician."

"Oh, he's coming, is he?" said the Doctor, coolly, "all right then." Doctor Speed was the physician who had reversed Doctor Findlater's treatment of Mary Leader. "Well, you understand th' etiquette of th' profession!"

In all justice, no man ever worked harder than did the Doctor through that dismal night, until the grey dawn began to glimmer, until the patient began to grow "easier," and cease from further short shrieks of agony, and finally sank into a doze. Then servants were put to watch, and the Doctor was shown to a handsome room, where he was to have a short slumber. As he lay down again to rest, it was with an ejaculation: "Oh, glory! This beats the Fair of Ballyscallion! Here I am brought back in triumph like a Roman general, and they must have me whether they will or no!"

There was no rest that night for Mrs. Leader. That haughty woman was nearly beside herself with anxiety and terror. She could hardly be said to have any regard for her husband; but the truth was, all arrangements as to her interests were in a shocking state of confusion. She had no jointure settled on her, and though his life had been insured for a large sum, the interest on that would be a mere "drop in the water" compared with her necessities. One of the grand features of the new settlement of the estate was to be a handsome jointure for her. All this hung suspended on this miserable illness which had come so wretchedly mal à propos. So she lay awake all that night and morning; her nerves wrung, and her face all changed and contorted by the suspense.

At last day began. The family began to collect again. The Doctor had been with his patient, who was bad, very bad still. A most serious, dangerous congestion, of which the Doctor said:

"I'd as soon as not have a pair of tongs between me and it. God send Speed soon, for I might just as well be comfortably calculating the longitude." Then to her: "It's very, very serious, I can tell you, ma'am."

"Then you have been treating him all wrong. I know you have. It serves us right——"

"Hush, now; I'll take none of that at such a crisis. It's a very ticklish case, as your London friend will tell you when he comes. There are diseases that would beat me, and him too, and we're both not ashamed to own it."

So that morning rolled by, and the Doctor was master of the situation, because the only one in the situation. All these hours Katey and Mary kept watch, soothing with their gentle touch; while Mrs. Leader entered and went out in a miserable restlessness, not knowing what to do. At last came the welcome sound of wheels.

The servants flew to the door, and the London doctor entered in that straightforward way, without asking a question

at the hall-door, which his brethren are so partial to. The London doctor was a cold, "dried" man, highly fashionable, and was physician to a royal duke. Like the inhabitants of a fortress about to be relieved, Mrs. Leader suddenly changed her manner to Doctor Findlater, and showed an exulting confidence she could now feel.

Our Peter, a little nervous perhaps, met "his colleague," as he called him, in the hall. To say the truth, the former had not much of a medical air, and the stranger received him coldly enough, rushing on steadily up-stairs, past the skirmishers, Mrs. Leader and others, who were seeking to "explain things" to him. He made straight for the sick-room, drew aside the bed-curtains, and took his survey.

"What are these things?" were his first words, as he unrolled some of the Doctor's blisters, mustard, &c.

"Oh, sir, 'twas critical, I assure you," said the Doctor. "Five minutes more and I believe the last puff would have been out of him. I'm all for the fluegistic treatment, you know?"

"No doubt," said the doctor, hastily removing these "things," with the same curious look, as though quite foreign to all his past experience. "We must discontinue all this. Understand me clearly. I don't think the man will recover; still——"

"So I said from the beginning," answered the Doctor.

In due time both came down to where Mrs. Leader was waiting nervously. How often the physician has thus to play foreman of the jury coming out of the room into a breathless court. Happily he does not announce his verdict so plainly, and Doctor Speed only said:

"If he has a strong constitution he may get through it. But it is hard to say anything at present. There must be great—the greatest—care; and, please, the most accurate attention to my prescriptions." Unconsciously he glanced at his coadjutor.

"Yes, there must be great care," repeated the Doctor—our Doctor. Somehow he was very uncomfortable, as all such men are in the presence of stern men, when their bonhomie and jokes—and some would add their humbug—are wholly out of place.

Doctor Speed then got pens and paper, and sat down to write. With what reverence are these scrawls received, as though magical or an incantation! How tenderly regarded by daughter and wife, and sent away by specially careful hands!

The Doctor had gone to tell his Katey the news, and the London doctor, pointing his pen after him, said abstractedly, "The local practitioner?"

"Yes," Mrs. Leader said, "we were forced to send for him—there was no one else."

"Oh, I see. At all events, these directions must be followed strictly, reversing all that has been done. I hope it is not too late."

"Why, there is no danger, is there?" she cried, almost wildly.

"My dear madam, there is danger in every case; even in a little cold."

"Couldn't you send us down some proper person? This mountebank is so ignorant."

The London doctor said he would: dined, waited till five or six o'clock, saw his patient again, pronounced him "something better," and then went away. Even as he parted with them, he seemed to feel insecure about Doctor Findlater. "I have set down the minutest details," he said, "and they must be followed."

"Of course I'll see to it." Peter could not shake off his awe of this cold creature. The worst was, it was conveyed so plainly to Mrs. Leader. He rallied in the hall.

"I am afraid, doctor, we're not all fours on the fluegistic treatment?"

"I dare say not. I don't know it; good morning!"

No wonder that Peter sent his blessing after him, as the carriage drove away.

Mr. Leader was in great agony, hardly able to speak above a whisper, often shrieking with pain. They watched all through the night, every one sitting up, lying on sofas and floors in adjoining rooms, that dreadful bivouacking, in short, which sets in on such occasions. Mrs. Leader was excited, restless, wretched. Already she was looking at Katey and the Doctor with an uneasy and suspicious air. As it came to ten o'clock she spoke to the latter bluntly.

"Now, Doctor Findlater, after to-night we shall not require your services. I am sorry to tell you so, but Doctor Speed is sending us down some one from town, who will carry out his views."

"Oh, indeed! Well, we'll see about that in the morning."

"Oh, not at all. He spoke very plainly about it: he said you had made great mistakes; we can't run any risks, it's too serious."

She could not resist, in all her trouble, giving him this stab; but he saw the venomous expression, and guessed that she had invented it.

"No," he said. "Excuse me, Mrs. Leader, I owe that to your ill-nature. When he comes the day after to-morrow, I'll put it to him in your presence, and we'll see what he'll say."

Mrs. Leader showed alarm at this test. "At all events, I dismiss you. I don't choose you to come here any more. I am tired of these discussions. We mean to choose our own physicians."

"You may, madam, for yourself, but Mr. Leader may choose his; take care that he doesn't wish me to stay. At all events, I don't stir till a successor comes. A duty is cast on me to see another medical man's orders carried out, and no unpleasantness nor sensitiveness shall stand in the way of that."

"Sensitiveness!" sneered Mrs. Leader.

The Doctor carried but the soul and body of a man. He groaned; it was very hard work fighting every inch of the ground.

That night he got his "little stretcher" laid in Mr. Leader's room. The patient appeared to be something better under the new doctor's treatment, but was talking a little incoherently. His feeble, dim eyes had settled on Katey, and seemed to find a pleasure in resting on her fair face. When he saw the Doctor's face behind hers again, a feeble smile came over his face, and he murmured half his name audibly, "Fin——"

"Go to bed, Katey; you must, now. I'll take the duty now. You don't mind me; you'd as soon have me as a strange doctor, wouldn't you? That jelly-fish of a man that came from London? Well, I must take poor Katey away if I go myself, and Mrs. Leader has given us notice to quit."

The answer to this artful speech was a look of alarm and a squeeze of the hand.

"Ah, my woman," said the Doctor as he lay down on his stretcher, "this night, I suspect, begins the battle-royal between you and me. I know what you're afraid of, and what you'll be at. But you don't stir me. No you don't, and I bet my head I don't leave this without persuading my poor friend yonder to do what's right for his children, and what's proper for the good of his own soul!"

Nor was the other combatant without her thoughts of defiance as she tried to seek uneasy sleep. "I know his low highwayman's game," she said to herself. "But he shall not stay." Then she became a prey to the wildest alarm, trembling all over. "Oh, what stupidity to have left it so late! And all my own doing! If anything should happen, what is to become of me then? No, all will be right, if I have this wretch removed; and he *shall* be, if I have him dragged down-stairs by policemen!"

Thus was the battle getting ready round a sick man's bed.

FAMOUS OLD SIEGES

The Prussians have won their battles with such extraordinary rapidity that their sieges have, in comparison, seemed lingering and slow.

There is reason, as some imagine, to suppose that sieges will, in future, become less sanguinary than of old. What the old sieges were like we will attempt to show by briefly sketching the chief features of five or six of the most celebrated. As nothing can well surpass their horrors, it is possible that in future such climaxes of war may be shorter and sharper, and that the suffering may be, at least, spread over a briefer period. But while ambition is still ambition, and manslaughter manslaughter, whether the war-cry be France or Prussia, the weapon German or French, we have little hope of philanthropy doing more than mitigating such cruel catastrophes.

One of the most remarkable sieges in the second Punic War was that of Saguntum. The first Punic campaign had ended with the Carthaginians surrendering Sicily and Sardinia. The second campaign, commencing 218 B.C., was fought in Spain, where Amilcar, Hannibal's father, had gone, taking with him his boy to teach him hatred against the Romans. Amilcar's successor, Hannibal, at once marched upon the Saguntines (people of Arragon), allies of Rome, and besieged Saguntum. This city, on the site of which, by the river Palancia, Murviedro now stands, was famous for its figs and for the earthenware cups it manufactured. Hannibal, then a mere youth, opposed at home by Hanno, and a faction antagonistic to his family, and which accused him of perfidiousness in breaking treaties with the Romans, pushed on the siege with great vigour. He urged his swarthy African soldiers to increase their exertions by himself working in the trenches among them, and by helping forward the mantlets and battering-rams. The defence was stubborn, and stones and arrows were replied to by arrows and stones. After, it is said, eight months' siege, Han-

nibal demanded cruel terms—the Saguntines were to leave their city to be demolished, surrendering up their arms, and carrying away only two suits of clothing. Many of the citizens, in their despair, finding the walls giving way, now lit a great funeral pile, and after burning all their wealth, threw themselves into the flames. While this horrible sacrifice was actually taking place, a tower which had been much battered suddenly fell. The Carthaginians instantly stormed in through the breach; and Hannibal, sounding the trumpets for a general assault, carried the city. With the relentless cruelty of those days, he instantly ordered that all Saguntines found in arms should be put to the sword. Most of the inhabitants died fighting, or barring themselves up in their burning houses with their wives and children, perished in the flames. Hannibal, nevertheless, secured great wealth and many slaves. The money he appropriated to war purposes; the slaves he divided among the soldiers; and the household stuff he sent to Carthage.

Years later, when the Romans girt up their loins to fairly conquer Spain, one of the greatest events that marked the war was the fifteen months' siege of Numantia, an almost impregnable city on the Douro, near the site of the present Soria, in old Castile. This fortress of the hardy Iberians was built on a steep hill, accessible only on one side, surrounded by forests, and partly moated by the Douro and a lesser stream. It had only a garrison of eight thousand fighting men, but these were Spanish veterans, skilled in the use of bow, spear, and sword. Several consuls had attacked Numantia before Q. Pompeius sat down before it with thirty thousand foot and two thousand horse; but disease attacked his army, and he was compelled to offer terms disgraceful to Rome, to which his successor, however, refused to accede. Soon after, another consul all but surrendered to the victorious Numantines his army of twenty thousand men. The Romans, enraged at these repulses, sent out in 133 B.C. their greatest general, Scipio Africanus, with four thousand volunteers. He found the army discouraged and demoralised, and at once reshaped it with a strong hand. He turned all the sutlers, diviners, and priests out of the camp; for vice and superstition had tainted the whole force. He then sold all needless waggons and beasts of burden, forbade any soldier more cooking utensils than a spit and a brass pot, ordered nothing to be eaten but plain roast and boiled, and counselled every one to sleep as he himself did, on the bare ground. Having thus hardened his army, he trained it by long toilsome marches, countermarches, trench digging, and wall building, and then laid waste all the territory from whence the Numantines drew their supplies. With a force of sixty thousand men, and recruited by Jugurtha from Numidia with some elephants and light horse, Scipio formed two camps, and sat down for the winter to starve out the stubborn but now straitened enemy. The town was three miles in circumference; round this area Scipio raised six miles of towers and ramparts, so that only the river-side remained open. To stop any divers or boats coming that way with provisions or intelligence, the Romans fastened tree trunks, spiked with sword and spear blades, to ropes, and let them whirl to and fro in the rapid current, so that to pass them became impossible. The Numantines made several gallant sorties, but hunger now began to strike them down quicker than the Roman sword. In this cruel emergency a man named Retogenes, and five brave friends, ventured on a daring attempt to bring the Druacians, a neighbouring tribe, to the aid of the suffering town. These six men, with six servants, went at night to the Roman camp, carrying broad boarded ladders. With these they rode over the Roman works, slew some of the guards, and dashed across to the Druacians. Getting no help, however, from their scared kinsmen, the brave fellows rode on to a town called Lutia, where the younger men agreed to join them. The elders, however, sent secretly to Scipio, who, marching forty miles with incredible rapidity, arrived at daybreak, and demanded the surrender of the rash young men. Four hundred of them being reluctantly given up, Scipio cut off their hands and returned to his camp. The Numantines at last grew hopeless, and offered to surrender, but the stern Roman would grant no conditions. The famine grew worse and worse: first, they ate leather and weeds, then rats and vermin, and even human flesh. Again they offered surrender, but claimed a day's respite. On that terrible day the leading men of the place slew themselves. On the third day a starved band of half-dying people came out of the gates. Scipio selected fifty for his triumph, sold the rest for slaves, and levelled the city. Four thousand Spaniards had kept the Roman armies at bay at Numantia for twenty-one years.

One of the greatest steps in that long career of unjust conquest and cruelty, which at last made Rome mistress of the world, was the arduous but successful siege of Carthage, 148 B.C. Blow by blow the dreadful enemies of the African power had cloven their way to their great rival. The third Punic War began by the consuls leaving Rome with eighty thousand foot and four thousand horse, who had stern orders from the senate not to return till they had removed Carthage out of its place. The Africans, tormented by civil war, began by the most degrading concessions. They surrendered five hundred of their noblest youth as hostages, and brought to the Roman camp two hundred thousand suits of armour, vast sheaves of spears and javelins, and two thousand catapults. Still the Romans were unsatisfied. They required the Carthaginians to leave their city for demolition, and to move ten miles inland. This was the last straw: the maddened people rose in despair. They at once released all their slaves and enrolled them as militia. The temples were turned into workshops, and men and women, old and young, toiled in gangs night and day at the fabrication of arms. Every day there were made one hundred and forty bucklers, three hundred shields, five hundred javelins, and one hundred catapult darts. The city, situated within a bay and on a peninsula, was twenty-three miles in circuit, and contained seven hundred thousand souls. The peninsula, forty-five miles in compass, was joined by an isthmus, on which stood the citadel, three miles broad. Towards the continent there were three walls, thirty cubits high, defended by towers rising two stories above the walls. Between the towers were barracks for twenty thousand foot, four thousand horse, and three hundred elephants. The two ports, in the inner one of which was the arsenal and the admiral's house, were barred by chains. In their first attack, the Romans were too confident and contemptuous. Three times they were driven from the walls, and once their fleet was almost totally destroyed by fire-ships. At last Scipio Æmilianus came and began the cruel work in earnest, first reforming the Roman army, which had become a mere army of prowling and quarrelling foragers. Having at last taken the isthmus, he there pitched his camp, and built a wall before it twelve feet high, to bar out all provisions from the continent. To equally block up the port and stop all food coming by sea, Scipio raised a huge mole at the mouth of the port; but the Carthaginians, full of energy, at once dug out a new passage and launched fifty fresh galleys. Æmilianus, however, soon after destroyed an African army coming to the rescue, and subdued all the neighbouring country. In the spring of 145 B.C., Scipio at last struck the wedge home. He stormed a breach near the port, and forcing his way into the great square, fortified himself there that night. There were three steep streets leading to the citadel to force, and the roofs of the houses lining those approaches were covered by archers and men, who hurled javelins, or threw down tiles and stones. These houses were cleared one by one, a desperate contest taking place on the roofs, till at last Scipio ordered the three streets to be simultaneously set on fire. Wounded men, old women and children, threw themselves from the roofs, or perished stoically in the flames. The Roman soldiers spent six days and nights in levelling the ruins and burying the dead. Scipio hardly allowed himself time for sleep or refreshment. Polybius describes seeing him seated on a mound, with tears in his crocodile eyes, repeating those lines in the Iliad, where Hector foretels the destruction of Troy. Conquerors, however reckless, are apt at times to give way to momentary outbursts of sham pity. Napoleon once wept at seeing a dog howling beside his dead master (one of some forty thousand harmless human beings that day sacrificed to the emperor's insatiable ambition). In later times, leaders scarcely less guilty have found comfort for their wounded feelings on such painful occasions in short texts of Scripture and biblical telegrams. To what the great peacemakers do or say history is indifferent.

To return to the siege. On the seventh day the citadel surrendered, on condition that the lives of the soldiers were spared. There first, according to Orosius, came out twenty-five thousand wretched women, then thirty thousand half-starved men. The Carthaginian general, Asdrubal, to the indignation of every one, privately surrendered. Nine hundred Roman deserters, hopeless of mercy, shut themselves in a temple of Æsculapius, and then set fire to the building. The Carthaginians who surrendered were sold as slaves, all deserters taken being thrown to the wild beasts of the amphitheatre. Scipio gave the plunder of the unfortunate city to his soldiers, except the gold, the silver, and the offerings in the temples. Thus Carthage fell; but Carthage was soon revenged, if it be true, as some

of the Roman historians contend, that from that moment covetousness and luxury began to corrupt the old stocial Roman virtues.

But the siege that seems to epitomise all the horrors of such contests, forming, as it were, the last crowning scene of a nation's tragedy, was the siege of Jerusalem by Titus, A.D. 70. The city then contained, according to Tacitus, six hundred thousand inhabitants. Josephus has well narrated the sufferings of his countrymen, not merely from the Romans, but also from the savage factions of the two rival chiefs, Simon and John—the former of whom held the upper city, the latter the Temple. Their followers tore each other to pieces up to the very moment that the Romans broke through the walls. The mode in which Titus conducted this memorable siege furnishes a good example of the manner in which the Romans conducted such operations. His legionaries, having established their camps on Scopas and the Mount of Olives, began to burn the suburbs of Jerusalem, cut down the trees, and raise banks of earth and timber against the walls. On these works were placed archers and hurlers of javelins, and before them the catapults and balistas that threw darts and huge stones. The Jews replied from the engines which they had taken from Roman detachments, but they used them awkwardly and ineffectually. They, however, were very daring in their sorties, endeavouring to burn the Roman military engines and the hurdles with which the Roman pioneers covered themselves when at work. The Romans also built towers fifty cubits high, plated with iron, in which they placed archers and slingers, to drive the Jews from the walls. At last, about the fifteenth day of the siege, the greatest of the Roman battering-rams began to shake the outer wall, and the Jews yielded up the first line of defence. Five days after, Titus broke through the second wall, into a place full of narrow streets crowded with braziers', clothiers', and wool-merchants' shops; but the Jews rallying drove out the Romans, who not having made the breach sufficiently large, were with difficulty rescued by their archers. Four days later, however, Titus retook the second wall, and then waited for famine to do its work within the city. The Jews began now to desert to the enemy in great numbers, and all these wretches the Romans tortured and crucified before the walls (at one time five hundred a day), so that, as Josephus says, "room was wanting for the crosses, and crosses wanting for the bodies."

At this crisis of the siege the Jews, undermining one of the Roman towers, set it on fire, and did their best to destroy all the besiegers' works. Titus now determined to slowly starve out his stubborn enemies, and began to build a wall round the whole city. This wall, with thirteen forts, the Roman soldiers completed in three days. Famine, in the mean time, was ravaging the unhappy city. Whole families perished daily, and the streets were strewn with dead bodies that no one cared to bury. Thieves plundered the half-deserted homes, and murdered any who showed signs of resistance, or who still lingered in the last agonies of starvation. The dead the Jews threw down from the walls into the valleys below. In the mean time, the Roman soldiers, abundantly supplied with corn from Syria, mocked the starving men on the walls, by showing them food. The palm-trees and olive-trees round Jerusalem had been all destroyed, but Titus, sending to the Jordan for timber, again raised banks round the castle of Antonia. Inside the city the seditions grew more violent, the partisans of John and Simon murdering each other daily, and plundering the Temple of the sacred vessels. A rumour spreading in the Roman camp that the Jewish deserters swallowed their money before they left Jerusalem, led to the murder, in one night, Josephus says, of nearly two thousand of these unhappy creatures. Again a part of the wall fell before the battering-rams, but only to discover to the Romans a fresh rampart built behind it. In one attack a brave Syrian soldier of the cohorts, with eleven other men, succeeded in reaching the top of the wall, but they were there overpowered by the Jews. A few days after, twelve Roman soldiers scrambled up by night through a breach in the tower of Antonia, killed the guards, and, sounding trumpets, summoned the rest of the army to their aid. The tower once carried, the Romans tried to force their way into the Temple, and a hand-to-hand fight ensued, which terminated in the Romans being driven back to the tower of Antonia. The Jews, now seeing the Temple in danger, and the assault recommencing, set fire to the cloister that joined the Temple and the castle of Antonia, and prepared for a desperate resistance in their last stronghold. In this conflagration, many of the Romans, advancing too eagerly, perished.

During all this fighting, the famine within the city grew worse and worse. The wretched people ate their shoes, belts, and even the leather thongs of their shields.

Friends fought for food, and robbers broke into every house where it was known that corn was hidden. Josephus even mentions a well-known case of a woman of wealth from beyond Jordan who ate her own child. The walls of the Temple were so massive as to resist the battering-rams for six days, so Titus at last gave orders to burn down the gates. At last, after a desperate resistance, the Jews were driven into the inner court, and the Temple was set on fire and destroyed, in spite of all the efforts of Titus to save it. When the Jews first saw the flames spring up, Josephus says, they raised a great shout of despair, and sixteen thousand of the defenders perished in the fire. The Romans, in the fury of the assault, burnt down the treasury chambers, filled with gold and other riches, and all the cloisters, into which multitudes of Jews had fled, expecting something miraculous, as their false prophet had predicted. Titus now attacked the upper city, and raised banks against it, at which about forty thousand of the inhabitants deserted to the Roman camp. The final resistance was very feeble, for the Jews were now utterly disheartened. The Romans, once masters of the walls, spread like a deluge over the city, slew all the Jews they met in the narrow lanes, and set fire to the houses. In many of these they found entire families dead of hunger, and these places, in their horror, the soldiers left unplundered. The Romans, weary at last of slaying, Titus gave orders that no Jew, unless found with arms in his hand, should be killed. But some soldiers still went on butchering the old and infirm, and driving the youths and women into the court of the Temple. The males under seventeen were sent to the Egyptian mines; several thousands were given to provincial amphitheatres to fight with the gladiators and wild beasts; but before all could be sent away, eleven thousand of them perished from famine. Altogether, in this cruel siege, there perished eleven hundred thousand Jews. This enormous multitude is accounted for by the fact, that when Titus sat down before Jerusalem, the city was full of people from all parts of Judæa, come up to celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Let us go down the ladder of time a few centuries later, till we find these grand conquerors of the Jews themselves besieged by Alaric and his Goths, 408. As stern and ruthless as Prussians, the Goths at once cut off from Rome the supplies of food, till famine and plague could silently do the work of sword and spear. The rations of bread sank rapidly from three pounds a day to the merest pittance. The rich strove to alleviate the general suffering, but in vain. Some wretches fed, it is said, on the bones of those they murdered, and even mothers destroyed their children and roasted their flesh. Many thousands of the citizens perished, and the cemeteries being in the possession of the invaders, the bodies remained unburied. The plague broke out, and new forms of death appeared. In vain Tuscan diviners promised to draw lightning from the clouds, and burn the Gothic camp. In vain the Roman ambassadors warned Alaric of the danger of the despair and fury of such a multitude.

The grim chief only smiled, and said: "The thicker the grass the easier it is to mow."

At first, greedy for spoil, and contemptuous of Roman weakness, Alaric demanded all the gold and silver in the city, and all the rich and precious movables. Finally he withdrew his savage troops, on receiving a ransom of five thousand pounds of gold, thirty-six thousand pounds of silver, four thousand silk robes, three thousand pieces of fine scarlet cloth, and three thousand pounds' weight of Indian pepper, then very scarce and dear. Never since Hannibal marched from Capua had Rome been so scared.

That taste of plunder only provoked the Gothic appetite. In 410, Alaric, provoked by some treachery of the emperor, entered Rome at midnight by the Salarian Gate. The Christian Goths respected the churches, but the Huns and the escaped slaves slew and plundered wherever they went. After six days' license they carried off waggon-loads of jewels, robes, and plate.

Attila, the next devastator of Europe, spared Rome, at the intercession of St. Leo, but Genseric, the Vandal, devoted fourteen days to loading his African slaves with the spoils of Jerusalem and the gold and silver of the Cæsars. In 537, the Goths were again swarming round Rome, and the celebrated defence of the city by Belisarius presents many features of interest.

The great general had a circle of twelve miles to defend against one hundred and fifty thousand barbarians. Against these Belisarius had only thirty thousand citizen soldiers, and five thousand of his veterans hardened in the Persian and African wars. On the ramparts, to aid his archers, were the balistas (great cross-bows), that threw arrows, and the onagri, that slung stones,

and on the walls of the mole of Hadrian he had piled ancient statues to hurl down at the enemy. The Goths spent eighteen days in preparing their attack, in collecting fascines to fill the ditches, and in making scaling-ladders for the walls. Their four battering-rams, of enormous size, were each worked by fifty men. They had also huge wooden turrets, drawn by oxen, to form movable forts for assailing the walls. The Goths advanced to the attack in seven columns. The archers of Belisarius, at his desire, shot the oxen that drew the towers, and so rendered them for the time useless. The first day of the attack the Goths lost thirty thousand men, and in a sortie the Romans burnt the formidable towers. In subsequent sallies five thousand of the Gothic cavalry perished, and the courage of the citizens grew with success. Belisarius, first freeing the navigation of the Tiber, now dismissed from the city all the useless mouths—the women, children, and slaves. Active care was taken to encourage the people, and to prevent treachery. Twice every month the officers at the gates were changed, and even the pope himself was sent into exile on suspicion of having corresponded with the Goths. The barbarians were at last worn out. After a siege of one year and nine days, they burnt their tents, and retreated over the Milvian bridge, having lost at least one-third of their host.

Again, in 546, Rome was tormented by its old enemy the Goth. Totila besieged it, and its garrison of three thousand soldiers was powerless to break the blockade. The pope had purchased an ample supply of Sicilian corn, but the avaricious governor seized it, and sold it to the richer citizens. Wheat soon rose to famine prices, and fifty pieces of gold were demanded for an ox. Gradually the people of Rome were reduced to feed on dead horses, dogs, cats, mice, and nettles. Crowds of starving creatures surrounded the palace of the governor, and requested either food or instant death. To these suppliants Bessus replied, with cold cruelty, that it was impossible to feed and unlawful to kill the emperor's subjects. At this a poor man, with five children, threw himself into the Tiber from one of the bridges in the presence of all the people. To the rich Bessus sold permissions to depart, but most of these cowards either expired on the highways, or were cut down by the Gothic cavalry. On Belisarius attempting to relieve the city, Totila erected a bridge with towers on the Tiber ninety furlongs below the city, and this bridge was defended by a boom and chains. But Belisarius attacked it with his infantry and two hundred large boats guarded with high bulwarks of loopholed planks. These boats were led by two immense barges bearing a floating castle higher than the bridge towers, and stored with fire, sulphur, and bitumen. The chains yielded to the impetus of the assaulting vessels; the fire-ships were grappled to the bridge, and one of the towers, containing two hundred Goths, was consumed by the flames. But in spite of this first success the attack failed. Belisarius was not supported by a timely sally, and soon after Rome fell into the hands of Totila. The conqueror demolished one-third of the walls, and threatened to burn and pull down the great monuments of the city, which barbaric resolution he would have carried into effect but for the intercession of Belisarius.

Let us conclude this summary of great sieges by a brief description of that of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453. The Turkish army was estimated at two hundred and fifty-eight thousand men, and their navy amounted to three hundred and twenty sail. Constantinople, a city of between thirteen and sixteen miles in extent, and containing a population of more than one hundred thousand inhabitants, was defended by a scanty garrison of seven or eight hundred soldiers and two thousand Genoese. The Turks boasted some enormous cannon, which, however, could not be fired more than seven times in the day. The Sultan's soldiers laboured to fill up the ditches with hogsheads and tree trunks, dug mines, employed battering-rams and catapults to aid their cannon, and reared against the walls wooden turrets with which to scale the ramparts. After many repulses at sea, Mahomet transported his fleet by land from the Bosphorus into the upper harbour, and constructed a huge floating battery. The Greeks tried to set this on fire in a nocturnal attack, but their foremost galliots were sunk, and forty young Greek officers were massacred, in retaliation for which cruelty the Greek emperor hung the heads of two hundred and sixty Moslem captives from the walls. The Turks at last ventured on a general assault, and, after a siege of fifty-three days, the city fell into their hands. In the first heat of victory about two thousand Greeks were put to the sword. The body of the last Greek emperor was found under a heap of slain. About sixty thousand of the Greek citizens were sold as slaves, and, what is of

more importance, the Byzantine libraries were destroyed or scattered, and one hundred and twenty thousand manuscripts, Gibbon says, at this time disappeared.

LAST WORDS.

Darling, 'tis all in vain,
No eager helping of the tender hands
Can ever knit again the failing strands,
The slow waves wash in twain.

Hush, love, no passionate prayer,
No wistful watching of the weary eyes,
Can bring noon's radiance back to winter skies,
Spring's glow to autumn's air.

My little day is done,
The weakening pulse, the feeble fluttering heart,
Have nearly throbbed their last: we two must part
We two, who were but one!

I will not say to-day,
"Would I had loved you better." May be so;
But all my heart could give it gave, I know.
The last hours glide away.

And you—you shall not weep;
Tears cannot stay me, and I want to rest
My living head upon your loving breast.
Time comes for woe, for sleep.

You will have time for sorrow
When the grave closes o'er my head for ever:
We may not watch the red sun sink, together,
Perchance, mine own, to-morrow.

Now while the world goes by,
While blossoms bloom and fade, fruits form and wither,
And winter's ice benumbs the summer river,
Babes smile and old men die.

Unheeded and unheeding,
Let life, and time, and death their records leave;
While you and I, on this sweet autumn eve,
Our life's last page are reading.

Talk of the past, my love,
Of the sweet days while yet you wooed your bride;
Of gloaming lingerings at the dim seaside,
Of walks through glen and grove.

Tell how the great waves crashed
In long low thunder music at our feet;
How far below our favourite woodland seat
The bright beck danced and flashed.

Listen! I heard a clang,
Mellow and musical of far-off bells;
How softly through the golden air it swells!
Just so the joy-peal rang.

From the old tower at home,
When we two started on life's path—ah me!
'Twas well we had no prophet's eyes to see
How soon the end would come.

Hush, hush, dear! had I known
Death lurked still closer, think you I had sought
For turn or stay? Nay: it is cheaply bought,
Such year as ours, mine own.

Look at the pretty bird,
There mid the fallen rose-leaves—in my dreams,
When, shy and sweet as April's earliest gleams,
Fresh hopes within me stirred;

I used to think, we two
Would love to show such pretty sights as those,
A bird, a butterfly, a crimson rose,
To eyes of baby blue!

Well, it will soon be past;
And you will plant bright flowers upon our earth,
I, and our wee bud blighted in its birth,
We gathered violets last.

Good-night, love. I am tired.
How the old hill, with all its forests crowned,
Smiles on the wealth of sweeping uplands round
By day's last glory fired!

SIX MONTHS IN THE EAST.

BETHANY AND BETHLEHEM.

Ragged little Arabs turned "wheels" at our horses' feet as we rode into Bethany, crying at the same time, "Dis way Martere (Martha's) house, master! backsheesh! Mairee! Martere! backsheesh! dis Lazaire's (Lazarus's) tomb! backsheesh!" There were at least a dozen of these ragged, bright-eyed little imps, who grinned, and touched their foreheads, and held out their hands for coppers, exactly as the so-called Arabs of our London streets used to do while running at the sides of omnibuses before "turning wheels" was prohibited by the police. Yet the Dean of Westminster, when writing of Bethany, says: "It may be worth mentioning—what I have not seen elsewhere described—that about a quarter of an hour's walk from the village are the ruins of what the Arabs call the house of Martha. In the midst of these fragments the rock rises into a block resembling the back of an animal with its head buried in the earth. This is said to be the ass on which Isa (Jesus) rode. 'He rode it to Martha's house, and then turned it into stone.'" The shrieking, tumbling little rascals by whom we were beset, furnished a singular illustration of the care with which the works of preceding travellers are studied by those who follow them into the Holy Land. The house and rock, which had not been described until the publication of Dean Stanley's book, are regular show-places now, as was proved by the confident air with which these children accompanied us through the hamlet, led the way to the places whose names they had learnt, and ran after us crying "backsheesh!" long after we had turned our backs on Bethany. They knew no other English words than the ones quoted, and had picked them up just as the mendicants who swarm in Jerusalem have learnt to say "How are you?" This phrase fused into a single word thus, "Ooo-aire-eue!" with each syllable elongated into a plaintive chant, has, when droned into your ears without cessation by the aged, the decrepit, the blind, and the deformed, a crushingly melancholy effect. It is as if some hideous parody of your own tongue had been invented in which abject misery should appropriately moan out its appeals; and as the phrase is always accompanied by out-

stretched hands, it evidently means to those using it what "Please remember the blind!" does at home. The Bethany cry was quite as repulsive, but more grotesque. The children had certainly no other idea of the names they used than that Frank travellers, for some mysterious reason, took an interest in the most tumble-down ruins in their village, and that these same travellers were occasionally to be coaxed out of money gifts when pertinaciously followed up

"It is useless," to quote Dean Stanley again, "to seek for traces of His presence in the streets of the since ten times captured city. It is impossible not to find them in the free space of the Mount of Olives." Of the three pathways which lead from Jerusalem to Bethany, that along which we rode is indisputably the one of the entry of our Lord, for it only answers to the requirements of the narrative. We crossed the sloping shoulder of Olivet, and had passed over the ground where, on a memorable day, the two crowds—one from Bethany and the other from Jerusalem—met. Yonder stood the gardens from which the branches and palm-leaves were cut to be thrown down as a carpet on His approach; there flocked the "multitude that was with Him when he called Lazarus from the grave" the day before. Here, where our horses are stumbling, the people "spread their garments in the way;" there, on the rocky ledge, where we stopped to look at and buy a curious relic in gold, which two wild-looking Moabites professed to have found in a distant cave the day before, "He, when He beheld the city, wept over it."

The village itself is a squalid, wretched place. A dirty Arab of middle age stood at the opening of what is shown as Lazarus's tomb, and beckoned eagerly to us to come in—at the same time offering candles for sale; but we had not the heart to dismount and enter, and the knave muttered what sounded like maledictions as we rode slowly by. Where was the use of our passing down the long, winding, ruinous staircase into the small chamber, or of our going to the other and smaller vault where the body is said to have been laid? The situation of the tomb, in the very centre of the village, does not correspond with the Gospel narrative; and its interior has, we read, no appearance of antiquity. So it was infinitely more congenial to our mood to gaze silently upon natural features which we knew to have remained unaltered since our Lord's time than to be saddened by one more example of credulity and superstition. We hoped, too, that by declining the conventional sights of Bethany we might rid ourselves of our unwelcome and repulsively noisy train—a hope which was not fulfilled. So closing our ears, as far as we were able, to the yells and laughter of the children, we applied ourselves steadily to the view, elucidating it by frequent reference to the authorities we carried among us. From where we stood we looked down the long and dreary descent to the Jordan valley, and knew that along its rugged pathway Christ came when He returned to Bethany in obedience to the summons of Martha and Mary. Yonder, He was met by Martha, with the agonised cry, "Lord, if thou hadst been here my brother had not died." He came from those distant hills which rise so grandly out of the plain; and the dark ground between us and them looked precisely as it does now when the bereaved sisters scanned it with streaming eyes for the Master's approach. These things are real, and the shocking incongruity of our immediate surroundings, the desolation and degradation of the city we have left, the false sites and lying traditions, all fade into insignificance as we gaze upon glens, mountains, and defiles, which are without traces of the habitations or handiwork of man.

The village of Bethlehem is as prosperous as that of Bethany is the reverse. Stonemasons were busy as we clattered down the precipitous alley, which is its main street; the people we met were well clad, and the terraces and gardens near are in the highest state of cultivation. In no part of Palestine are the characteristic vineyards of Judæa, with their watch-towers and walls, seen in greater perfection, and, though the beauty for which the Bethlehem ladies are said to be celebrated was conspicuously absent in those we saw, it was refreshing to meet with female faces which were not hidden behind an impenetrable veil, and to know that the turbaned heads and flowing robes of their lords belonged to men professing the same faith as ourselves. The Bethlehemite Christians have a reputation for shrewdness, industry, and thrift, and the striking fertility of their enclosures, and the care with which they plant and keep up the lands on the mountain-sides, make an agreeable contrast to the sterility of the country around. But Bethlehem is a terrible place for the traveller who longs for quiet during his examination of its holy places. There is a broad terrace or plateau leading up to the group of convents and the Church of the

Nativity, which commands a glorious view. On this a sort of fair is held, where the importunity and chaffering which is so disgusting at the entrance to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem are aggravated and multiplied.

Bethlehem drives a busy trade in beads and relics, and the doors of the Temple are its chosen market-place. All pilgrims come here. The roads or pathways from Jerusalem, Hebron, Jericho, the Jordan, and the Dead Sea, all lead to this terrace, and if you come through the village you are spied as you emerge from the steep and narrow street, and are hemmed in by a mob of would-be vendors long before you halt. There is a general resemblance between the articles offered for sale and those hawked about the Holy City; but the carvings on mother-of-pearl, forming what are known as "Bethlehem shells," are more elaborate, and rosaries are cheaper and in greater variety. A bright-eyed, handsome lad, in a scarlet cloak, and with white under-robes, seizes my bridle, and shakes huge bunches of coloured beads in my face with his disengaged hand; one of his rivals holds my stirrup, and whispers, "Me better as him —sheap" (cheap), as I alight; and the moment I am on my feet, a chattering, gibbering crew fasten on me, and implore, demand, threaten, and persuade. There is a passionate earnestness, a fiery determination about this crowd which has no parallel in my experience of traders. Each member of our little party was set at with the same vigour, and overpowered by numbers in the same way. There were other strangers present. A string of footsore pilgrims slouched along, among whom we recognised some of our poor Russian fellow-voyagers. These had their arms and wrists newly marked with sacred symbols by the professional tatooers of Jerusalem; and their manner was as unobservant and dejected as ever; while their long garments of undressed sheepskin, their fur caps, and huge boots, steamed again in the hot sun. They all bought beads and relics; some to sell at an enormous profit to devout neighbours at home, and others to keep as protections against ill-fortune to their dying day. A fresh-coloured young English clergyman, in black kid gloves, a high-church waistcoat, and a white tie, ambled gently off as we arrived; his wife (newly married, we opined) and her mamma, who were on inferior animals, lagging perforce behind. We had ridden far, and were heated, dusty, and dishevelled; and the trim and neat appearance of this rather supercilious young priest roused some such feelings as were experienced by Hotspur when he met the fop on the battle-field. We decided, to our own satisfaction, that our friend had not brought his mother-in-law to the Holy Land from choice, and that the old lady, who lost her temper with the relic vendors, and called loudly after him for protection, was an incubus rather than a delight.

The faithful Alee succeeds in pushing back our enterprising assailants after a time, and we immediately cross the threshold of the oldest monument of Christian architecture in the world. We stand in what remains of the noble Basilica erected by the Empress Helena in the year 327, a building which was repaired last as a church by our English king, Edward the Fourth. While we are talking with the good Latin father, who expatiates upon the cruelty of making this grand nave common to other sects of Christians as well as to the only true church, the clamorous hawkers from outside sidle up to us one by one, and in the sacred edifice itself renew their noisy attempts at sale and barter. Turning from them indignantly, we are about to disavow all complicity in the outrage, when we find the worthy monk looking on with complacent approval, as if the profanation inseparable from the fact of Greek and Armenian Christians being permitted to worship under the same roof with himself, had exhausted his power of horror, and made smaller sacrilege seem venial. A Jew pedlar is not generally inert in the pursuit of business; a Yankee dealer in "notions" has the character of being smart; a loud-mouthed cockney betting-man, eager to complete his book, is sufficiently clamorous and tiresome; and guides and dealers in curiosities prey upon tourists in all parts of the world. But the Bethlehemite relic-dealer combines the disagreeable peculiarities of all these, and in offensive pertinacity and ostentatious greed for gain, excels his sordid brotherhood all over the world. We have to ask the monk to give us refuge in his convent before we can shake our persecutors off, and there try to forget our troubles while discussing some excellent lemonade, and criticising the highly-coloured lithographic portraits of Bomba, king of Naples, the Emperor Francis Joseph, and their respective consorts, all in the bloom of their first youth, which decorate the buttery walls.

Some conversation with the holy man, our host, chiefly on the miracles falsely claimed by the Greek and Armenian con-

vents next door, and the painful humiliation implied in the opposition monks being permitted free access to the sacred sites, and we are handed over to another Latin father, and with him descend a narrow passage hewn out of the solid rock, at the end of which is a door leading into a large oblong vault. We enter and find it glimmering with many lights, and profusely decorated. There are pictures of mediæval saints in heavy gold frames; silver hanging lamps, which give forth a faint fragrance as they wave to and fro; coarse oil-paintings, flowers, carvings, and marble, all seen dimly, and all having a painfully peep-show and theatrical air.

The peasant pilgrims from Russia are here when we arrive, gazing open-mouthed and stupefied as their spiritual director drives them from place to place, pointing out the claims to sanctity of each, with the emphasis and authority of a lecturer at a mechanics' institute. At the far end of the vault is a small semicircular recess, paved by a marble slab, with a silver star let into it. The pilgrims crawl to this on their stomachs, press their lips to the cold stone, and mutter prayers, oblivious to all around. They are as men and women who are stunned. Their minds cannot grasp the situation, and each batch has to be prodded and tugged at repeatedly before it can be persuaded to rise, so that the entire party may kiss the stone and offer up thanksgiving in turn. It is a strange and pitiable sight. There are many small silver lamps waving over the star, and by the light of these we read the inscription in Latin: "Here Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary." The pilgrims who have crawled and kissed, look at this, and hear its purport, bewildered. The priest with them is of course from the Greek convent, and our Latin guide declines to approach the shrine until it is purified from his rival's presence. We keep, therefore, in the recess known as the Chapel of the Manger, and gaze from there at the Russian prostrations and prayers, while the two priests exchange looks of mistrust, defiance, and contempt. But what are those stolid figures, who keep guard with fixed bayonets, one on each side of the much-kissed marble slab, motionless as the effigies they resemble in the dim, uncertain light? Alas! they are Mahomedan soldiers placed here by the Turkish government, partly on the principle on which a British sentry does duty in the regalia chamber of the Tower of London, but chiefly to prevent Christian animosities attaining a dangerous height. They looked superior and contemptuous, and grounded their arms, and relieved their throats, and changed their posture for convenience sake without once glancing at the worshippers at their feet; and in the manner which is universal among military sentries whether you see them in St. James's or Syria. The tradition that assigns this as the spot upon which the most awful of the associations of Bethlehem centre, differs from the other holy places in Palestine in one important particular. It is of older date than the visit of the Empress Helena; and it is known that almost from New Testament times "a cave near Bethlehem" was fixed on as the place where Joseph and Mary lodged, and where our Lord was born and laid in a manger. Their taking up their quarters in a cave was attributed to there being no room "in the village," a deviation from the sacred story, found in the Apocryphal Gospels, and which was believed in remote times by Christians and unbelievers alike. But there are grave reasons for doubting the claims of even this, the best authenticated of the conventional holy places. During the time of the invasion of Palestine by Ibrahim Pasha, the Arabs took possession of the convents, and on stripping this subterranean cave of its gilding and marbles, they are said to have found an ancient sepulchre on the very spot, and "it is possible, but very improbable, that a rock devoted to sepulchral purposes would have been employed by the Jews, whose scruples on this point are too well known to need comment, either as an inn or a stable."

We pause for a few minutes before the reputed birthplace, to enable the Russian group to visit the remaining grottos without our overtaking them, and are again struck by the immobility of the sentries. Frequently on duty here, they see the simple altar-table above the silver star used by the various Christian sects in turn, and know how cordial is the hatred subsisting between each. What does Hassan, the Turkish private, think of it all? How does Christianity present itself to his unenlightened mind? Himself taught by his prophet that both the making of images and the painting of pictures are sins before God, what is his solution of the stone-kissing, and the bowing, and what his private estimate of the pictures, statues, effigies, and ornaments which multitudes come from beyond the seas to gaze at and adore?

We are taken to the marble trough which represents the manger, and told, with a

chuckle of triumph over the despoiled Armenians and Greeks, that the original manger was carried to Rome many years ago, and is now to be seen in one of its churches. We are then shown the station of the Wise Men, and are taken, still underground, to the cave which formed the study of St. Jerome, as well as to the Altar of the Innocents, over which hangs a painting representing the murder of the twenty thousand children by the order of Herod. There is no sort of doubt that St. Jerome passed a great portion of his life in the cave which bears his name. From here he wrote the "treatises, letters, and commentaries which he poured forth from his retirement to terrify, exasperate, and enlighten the western world." But this kind of authenticity seems of little value. Bethlehem's other associations fade into insignificance by the side of the awful one which draws pilgrims to it from every quarter of the globe, and which makes its name memorable wherever Christianity is preached. As we mount and ride slowly off, we gaze over fields in which Ruth gleaned when she returned to Bethlehem with her mother-in-law, Naomi, and trace the road which the prophet Samuel traversed when he brought his horn of oil to the house of Jesse, the Bethlehemite, there to anoint David. But even such names as these seem of minor import now. They are dwarfed by other and more soul-absorbing traditions. For it is the knowledge that where he stands "the good tidings of great joy" were first spoken, that here "glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men," was proclaimed, which cleaves to the heart of the stranger in Bethlehem, merging every other consideration in awe, and sending him forth softened and humble.

MILITARY TALKERS AND DOERS.

The relative degree of value to be attached to Talkers and Doers—each considered as a separate class—is a subject which has been already more than once handled in these pages.* Hitherto it has been chiefly in relation to matters connected with art that the proceedings of these two sections of society have been brought before the reader's notice. This, however, is hardly doing them complete justice; their respective merits being conspicuous in relation to other concerns of a widely different nature, and this same propensity on the part of one set of men to talk, and of another—and much smaller—set to do, being manifested in connexion with religion, education, philanthropy, and political economy, quite as often as in relation to questions of an exclusively artistic nature. On all the above-mentioned points, and on many more, it is the custom of the talking fraternity to lay down the law for the benefit of those comparatively un-gifted mortals who can only do.

The Talker, when discoursing on these and other topics, has a way of "putting" things quite clearly and rationally which is intensely aggravating. His plans are so simple and reasonable, so distinct in direction, and at the same time so exceedingly difficult in the carrying out; this carrying out, by the way, being a part of the business with which he never meddles. He merely gives directions. "Let," he says in holding forth on some such subject as popular education, for instance, "let a house-to-house visitation be instituted by a set of paid officials in whose discretion and ability implicit trust can be placed; let strict inquiry be made as to the number of residents between the ages of six and sixteen in each house; let the parents be required to prove that all such are in the habit of receiving regular instruction, and in any case of default let such a heavy penalty be inflicted as shall be effectual in checking all such neglect of education for the future." On every subject our Talker is ready thus to hold forth, nor do any practical difficulties in the carrying out of his orders stand in the way of his authoritative "let." "Let all children throughout the length and breadth of the land be compelled to attend school." "Let all public-houses be closed after ten o'clock at night." "Let a virtually prohibitive duty be imposed on the sale of spirituous liquors of any kind and sort." It is thus that the Talker issues his orders. If you, the Doer, cannot carry them out in practical detail, so much the worse for you, and for society.

But perhaps the subject on which of all others the Talker loves best to hold forth, is that which has just now unhappily got such a strong hold upon us all—the subject of war and fighting. Whenever there is anything doing in the fighting way, the Talker comes to the fore. If a military expedition is about to be undertaken, if in any quarter of the earth British rule is to be set up, and native power to be put down—whatever the force of the obstacles which have to be overcome, whatever the nature of the opera-

* See ALL THE YEAR ROUND, New Series, vol. iii., pp. 271, 537; vol. iv., p. 180.

tions which have to be carried on—he always knows exactly how all ought to be conducted in order to the attainment of a successful issue. His imperative mood comes out strongly on these occasions. Be the military operations in connexion with which he has to offer a suggestion what they may, he is never at a loss. Suppose it is a question of a native insurrection in one of our distant dependencies which demands public attention, he is in a position, quite unhesitatingly, to tell the authorities how they ought to act. "Let," he says, "a careful census be prepared of the population in each of the districts supposed to be inhabited by the disaffected; let the ryots (the Talker loves a native word) be compelled to furnish a report of the number of coolies in their employ, and let a requisition be issued, compelling each one of them to join himself to some one section of the forces sent out by the British government. By this means not only would a large body of troops be got together, but it would also be made to appear which among the ryots were favourable to the cause of order and which not."

The native rising involves the necessity of a military expedition into the interior of the country, which again brings the Talker to the front with all sorts of practical suggestions for facilitating the carrying out of the enterprise. "Let," he repeats, using his favourite formula, "let each man receive, at starting, a certain allowance of meat, of biscuit, and of rum, all divided into rations, each sufficient for a single day. Let him have provender for his horse similarly apportioned. Let his saddle be so contrived that on being removed from the horse's back it shall form into a camp-bedstead, with mattress and blanket complete. He should, of course, in such a climate, be provided also with a portable refrigerator, and, above all things, with one of the patent charcoal filters, which have always proved so serviceable where the water has been of inferior quality." The suggestions of our Talker are indeed both numerous and varied. "It is well known," he says, "that the natives have been taught from infancy to regard crocodiles with a superstitious terror altogether unconnected with the positive capacity for inflicting injury possessed by these rapacious creatures. Let a sufficient number, then, of these formidable reptiles be got together and thoroughly tamed, and let them be trained to precede each of our regiments as it advances towards the enemy. Depend on it that at the first glimpse of the object of his alarm every one of the native insurgents will be seized with panic, and will turn and fly to the nearest place of refuge, where he thinks he may find shelter from his deadly foe."

But the military Talker is good at criticism as well as at suggestion. He is well up in the literature of war, and can quote his Vauban, and all sorts of other military authorities, to the confusion of such unfortunate Doers as incur his disapproval. "There is no doubt," he will say, on passing judgment on some recent passage of arms, "that in this case a very grave blunder has been committed. That an officer in the position in which General Shako found himself after the affair at Unterken should allow himself to be surrounded by the enemy, and should, in consequence, find himself deprived of his communications, is contrary to every law of military tactics of which we have any knowledge. 'Whenever,' says Todleben, 'a commanding officer perceives that the troops under his command are in danger of being cut off by the forces of the enemy, it behoves him,' &c. &c." Or, not satisfied with criticising the past, he will give directions as to the line of conduct which the general is to pursue in the future. "Let General Shako," he says, or writes, for he is as fond of talking with pen and ink as with larynx and tongue—"let the general intrench himself within the strong position, which everybody knows would be afforded by the Altenberg range of hills, taking care to be provided with provisions and ammunition enough to last him for at least six months. Let him thence send out detachments of troops, and carefully reconnoitre the neighbouring forest country, with a view to such a vigorous sortie as may disperse the enemy from the immediate neighbourhood of his camp."

It is thus that the Talker lays down the law—what time the Doer, this much-patronised General Shako, is contending with difficulties of which nobody but himself can have any knowledge, including insufficient supplies, antagonistic natives, impracticable roads, and other embarrassing impediments.

One more illustration of this particular section of our subject, and the military phase of Talking and Doing may be dismissed.

At a meeting which took place in the course of last spring at the United Service Institution, in Whitehall-yard, a discussion was held, in the course of which this sub-

ject of military Talking and Doing was rather curiously illustrated. The topic under discussion at this meeting was military labour, and the propriety of employing private soldiers in all sorts of occupations unconnected with their military duties, both with a view of utilising their spare time, and also of averting the bad consequences of their having too much leisure at their disposal. During the debate which took place after the main business of the evening had been concluded, the meeting was addressed by both military men and civilians—professionals and amateurs—one of the latter, in the course of the discussion, venturing on ground which it is always dangerous for the amateur to tread, and touching on a point of an entirely technical nature—the utility, namely, of sentries, and their value as maintainers of order in times of peace. The speaker contended that the number of soldiers employed on ordinary sentry duty was much greater than was necessary, and mentioned as an illustration of his position that he had seen an officer, with a guard of twenty men, on duty at one of the entrances to the barracks at Dover. This disparagement of the value of sentries naturally provoked a considerable amount of discussion among the professional men who were present at the meeting, and the importance of the work done by sentries, and the necessity for their presence in such numbers at the Dover barrack-gate, were strongly urged by more than one of the military men who assisted at the discussion.

It was reserved for a great Doer to set the whole matter before the persons assembled there in conclave in half a dozen sentences. At a moment when a pause in the debate took place, a gentleman, whom no one at first recognised, was heard asking permission to make a very few remarks on the subject under discussion, and stating, as an excuse for addressing the assembly without having first given notice of his intention to do so, the fact that he had had some amount of experience in military matters, at home and abroad, and would perhaps, in consequence, be able to say what might have some useful bearing on the matter in hand. He showed—and the clear perception of a Doer was conspicuous in his words—that the whole education of the soldier has reference to the exceedingly brief period of his being actually engaged in battle. The tendency of his remarks was to prove that for this crisis, which might be an affair of only a few minutes, the whole previous career of the soldier is simply a preparation. The profession of arms is not exercised every day as other professions are, but now and then, and at very rare intervals. For those rare occasions the whole of the remaining portion of the soldier's life is simply a preparation, and of such preparation the discharge of similar duties to this of mounting guard—which the civilian thought monopolised an undue share of the soldier's time—was a most essential part. The engaging in such work—not sentry work alone, but other occupation of the same kind—is a part of the education of the soldier. He practises vigilance. He keeps his hand in, so to speak. He learns his part, and rehearses it continually, and we all know to what extraordinary completeness and certainty in actual performance the multiplying of rehearsals invariably leads. The soldier's great drama that he acts in is such an important one, and the part he has to play is so difficult, that we cannot doubt of the necessity of these perpetual rehearsals. It is so indispensable that the soldier should be thoroughly "up" in his part—a part played so often on one occasion only, and on the success or failure of which so much hinges.

It was this which, on the occasion to which reference is here made, the professional man—who proved to be no other than Lord Napier of Magdala—sought to explain to the amateur who objected to the sacrifice of the soldier's time, which seemed to him to be involved in his continual practice of the duties of war in time of peace. The discussion furnishes an admirable example of the hopelessness of any attempt on the part of those who are unacquainted with all the ins and outs, all the technicalities which belong to the actual working of any profession, to pronounce an opinion upon practical questions connected with it.

It is hardly possible just now to leave this subject of Military Talkers and Doers without dwelling for a moment on the remarkable confirmation of our theories as to the relative value of the two classes which has been furnished in the course of the war which is just now being carried on between France and Prussia. During all the earlier portion of this struggle there has been certainly a prodigious amount of Talking got through on one side, and of Doing on the other. With what prodigies of Talk was not this war inaugurated on the French side? With what "brave words" did the nation's leader take the field? The enemy was to be stunned by the sharpness of the blow which

was to be inflicted. This was to be the first part of the programme. Then followed the tall talk about "baptisms of fire," and the like, till the Sedan collapse came. Still the big words prevailed, though the big deeds were wanting. "Paris puts its faith not in barricades, but in its ramparts of citizens' hearts." "France requires martyrs, and Paris offers up its two millions of victims." "Let us make a pact with victory or death." With these and the like phrases we are all as familiar as with that strong assertion of the colonel of the Pontifical Zouaves that he would die on the threshold of the Vatican, succeeded by his evacuation of the premises in question sound in wind and limb. Thus have the French "unpacked their hearts with words," while their adversaries have been diligently occupied with deeds. Talking and Doing this, surely, and on a great scale.

HOW IT HAPPENED.

This is the way it came about; and mind! you are to believe me and no one else: certainly not Cousin Lotty or Aunt Julia, for they were not fair witnesses, as you will hear.

We were all staying down in a very wild and remote country place on the edge of a magnificent common, far away from anything like a town or railway, and we were going to stay there for the summer. Aunt Julia and Cousin Lotty had just come from France, where they had been for a few weeks; and though they seemed to us a little affected, and as if they liked to give themselves airs—why! Cousin Lotty used to speak with a strong foreign accent, and they were never tired of saying what French people did, and said, and thought, and all so much better than the English—still, as we were living very cheaply, they were glad to join us; and as they were our aunt and cousin we all did our best to get on well with them. The "all" meant mamma, Minnie my young sister, myself Emmy, and Uncle Robert, mamma's brother, who lived with us. Aunt Julia was poor papa's sister, a widow like mamma; Cousin Lotty was six-and-twenty; I was nineteen, and Minnie three years younger.

Uncle Robert was very badly off; so was mamma; but we had another uncle whom we had never seen—poor papa's eldest brother; Aunt Julia's brother too of course; our Uncle Tremlett, a rich man of whose very name we were in awe, for he made mamma an allowance, in fact supported us all, papa having died suddenly and left nothing; and I believe he did not much like having to make it, though he did not grumble now, and was punctual to a day in his cheques. But he had grumbled very much at first, and mamma had never forgotten it. Poor mamma! I am sure she did not like to take the money. But she could do nothing else. She was in wretched health, and Mary and I were too young to work for ourselves, when all this took place that I am going to tell you of—at least Minnie was if I was not. Besides, Uncle Tremlett would not hear of my going out as a governess or anything like that, and mamma naturally obeyed him in all he wished.

As I tell you, Minnie and I had never seen this uncle of ours, nor indeed had Cousin Lotty; for he had quarrelled once with Aunt Julia, and as he was not a man to forget a thing of this kind, he did not take any notice of the daughter. Mamma, I knew, was in mortal fear of him; so was Uncle Robert. Dear Uncle Robert! Let me tell you a little about him before I go on with my story. He was—what can I say to put it gently?—not quite right, you know; perfectly harmless, and so sweet and good, and with such a beautiful face! His hair was long and white and wavy; his face was thin and pale; he had large, light, grey eyes that were generally cast up, and he always looked as if he was seeing angels or saying his prayers. And so he was. Even his poor, weak, wavering mouth, with that simple smile on it like a child's, was beautiful; and I am sure his nose, keen, and high, and bony, was the handsomest you could see anywhere. He was proud of his nose, the darling. And so, if he had not as much intellect now as other people, he had more beauty and goodness; and he had once been cleverer than other people. He had gone out of his mind when a young man, partly from over study at college, and partly from a love disappointment, just as he had taken orders and expected to be married immediately. I don't know how, but Uncle Tremlett was mixed up in this matter somehow, and his very name was enough to make Uncle Robert wild with terror or convulsed with grief. So we never spoke of him. He had lived with mamma since he came out of the asylum. She was his favourite sister, and he was very fond of Minnie and me.

Well, you may imagine our state when Uncle Tremlett wrote to mamma, saying that he was coming to pay us a visit at

Woodham, where we were staying, and that he was going to bring his adopted son, Hume Cardew, with him. We had never seen this young man—"Uncle Tremlett's lubie," as Cousin Lotty called him—and we were naturally very curious to see him; especially as we felt that if Uncle Tremlett had wanted to adopt any one, he might have taken one of us. But though both Minnie and I wanted to see him, we were nothing to Cousin Lotty. She worried one's life out about this Mr. Cardew, wondering what he was like, and how much he would have when Uncle Tremlett died, and if he was in love with any one, and all sorts of speculations of things with which we had nothing whatever to do. I declare I got quite tired of hearing his name; and then Cousin Lotty used to say such rude things to me. She once said that she was sure I would set my cap at Mr. Cardew. I was so angry with her! but I am so stupid when taken suddenly that I could not answer her as I should have liked. All I could think of at the moment was: "I have no cap to set, Cousin Lotty," which I said very indignantly. And then she laughed, and her green eyes looked like a cat's, for she half shut them as she drawled out, with a strong foreign accent: "So! we affect the petite ingénue, do we?"

I wish great girls might slap each other as when they are little.

Aunt Julia was very vexed that Uncle Tremlett did not write to her instead of to mamma, but it was not our fault, so she need not have been so cross to us. Uncle Robert was at first furious, and we were sadly afraid we should not be able to manage him; but he soon got out of that state, and went into one of the most painful melancholy, shutting himself up in his own room, and refusing to come out or to let any one but mamma or me go in. However, we had to make the best of things, and we all put on our nicest faces and pleasantest manners, when, in the soft still summer's evening, a carriage came rattling up to the door, and we flocked out to receive Uncle Tremlett and his adopted son.

I scarcely know what I, for one, expected to see in Uncle Tremlett. In consideration, I suppose, of his reputation for severity and general bogeyism, I had a vague notion that he must be a tall, authoritative-looking man; but he was not. He was a small, thin, dapper little man, almost painfully neat, and with a constant smile. Not a smile like dear Uncle Robert's, that was a habit of mind, but a fixed, made-up smile, that looked like a mere trick of the face. Not that it was a bad face; it was kind in a way, but it struck me as being neither candid nor quite sincere; and it looked mean, too, though he was really kind-hearted I am sure, and to us generous.

As for Hume Cardew, I scarcely know what to say of him. He was, he is, the handsomest fair man I have ever seen, and the others thought so as well as I. He seemed to feel a little awkward at first, and his position among us was awkward; but that soon wore off, for he was too much a man of the world to let us be uncomfortable because of him. My uncle was very kind to us, so far as a soft voice, a quiet manner, and that eternal smile went; but I felt he was taking the measure of all of us girls, and trying to find out what we were like. He paid the most attention to Cousin Lotty, and after her to Minnie; least of all to me. He spoke to me only once during the evening, but he watched me till I was crimson, and so awkward and nervous I scarcely knew what I was about. As for Hume, he devoted himself to mamma and Aunt Julia, and I don't think that on that first evening he knew one of us from the other, or could distinguish Cousin Lotty with her golden chignon, from Minnie with her long, straight, brown hair falling down to her waist, or me, with my black rough head, from either. Not that my hair is quite black, only it is very dark brown, and will curl and stick about as if it had been frizzed. As, of course, Uncle Robert would not come in, we had Uncle Tremlett and Hume Cardew as our only gentlemen, and had to make much of them accordingly. Not that I approve of flattering men just because we are women, but Aunt Julia used to say that I was bold and unwomanly when I talked like that. I do not think I was so bold as Cousin Lotty when she used to pay gentlemen such attention, and say such flattering things to them that really they did not know what to do or where to look. I have seen Hume so much embarrassed by her that I have quite pitied him, and done all that I could to help him by saying the most disagreeable things to him I could think of; but I did not mean them, and he knew that. He used to pretend he did not like it when I snubbed him to counteract Cousin Lotty's extraordinary flattery, but I think he did after all. "Miss Pert," or "Little Fire and Fury," as Uncle Tremlett called me when he got to know me better, and was in a good humour. But it is better to be both pert and furious than as Cousin Lotty was,

with green eyes and a flattering manner, and the habit of speaking against every one as soon as they were out of hearing.

Uncle Tremlett and Hume Cardew stayed a long time with us, and during all the time Uncle Robert never appeared, nor did Uncle Tremlett ask for him. Mamma was sadly perplexed what to do between her brother and her brother-in-law, her charge and her patron; and I am sorry to say that I accused her in my own heart of paying too much court to Uncle Tremlett, not because she liked him best but because he was the richest, while she left the one she did love to get on without her as he best could. Minnie and I used to go and sit with the poor darling as often as we could, but Minnie, of course, being so young, had not much will of her own, and if Uncle Tremlett or Hume Cardew asked her to be with them, why she left Uncle Robert to himself, and did as she was told. But I was older, and took my own way more.

I remember one day especially. We were all going on a charming excursion—the excursion of the neighbourhood—and Uncle Tremlett had been quite excited about it. Even mamma was going, and only Uncle Robert was to be left. I went into his room to wish the poor dear good-bye, and I found him in tears, weeping like a child. He did not often do this, but when he did it was very painful to witness, and all the more so because of that usual habit of his of being rapt away in a vague unfounded happiness which, however mournful it was for us to see, was a very heaven to him. I threw my arms round his neck, and smoothed down his dear silvery hair, and asked him to tell me why he was so unhappy, and why he was crying; and after a long time of coaxing I got him to confess that he thought we had all gone without wishing him good-bye, and that he was lonely and did not like it. And he did not like being left, he said, as if he had been a child. He saw ugly faces and horrid sights; and ever since that fiend (he meant Uncle Tremlett) had come into the house She had not once been to see him as She used; She had kept in heaven away from him, and had left him to the demons.

"That fiend came between us once before," he said, flinging up his hands while I wiped away his tears; "and now he has driven her away again: and not only her, but all of you, even you my little Emmy, that I love so much!"

"No, dear; not any of us, and certainly not me," I said coaxing him; and then I added impulsively, "I have come to stay with you to-day. The others are going; and when they are fairly off you and I will have a nice walk on the common."

You should have seen his pleasure at this; but I don't know why, as soon as I had said it, a great lump rose in my throat, and I had to turn away that he should not see my eyes get wet. I had looked forward to this day with so much pleasure, but still I could not leave the poor darling alone! I knew that Cousin Lotty would make out that I had done wrong in staying behind, and she would say that I had "motives"—that was her phrase; and I knew that she would monopolise Hume Cardew. I could fancy her leaning across the carriage to speak to him, looking up into his face and hanging all her weight on his arm in that odd way she had. Of course she was quite at liberty to do this if she liked. I only hoped she would not prejudice him or Uncle Tremlett against me. As uncle's adopted son, I regarded Hume almost as a cousin, and naturally I did not want him to hate me merely to please Cousin Lotty.

When I went back to the drawing-room to tell the rest I was not going with them, I little knew the storm that would break out. Uncle Tremlett was furious. He called me insolent and undutiful, and declared he would disinherit me—cut me off with a shilling; and I am sure I had never given it a thought that he would leave me even that. Mamma was frightened and scolded me too; Aunt Julia made the worst of it she could; and Cousin Lotty said in her most unpleasant voice: "Dear uncle, do not you know that this is Emmy's way? She enjoys herself in making herself a martyr, and attracting the regards of an assemblage. It is her foible—the way your very unselfish, very conscientious little people have," she added with a little laugh.

Hume was the only one who kept silence; and he walked away to the window, so that I could not see his face. But I was firm. Poor Uncle Robert! How could I have deserted him! it would not have been right; and the party went off without me—Lotty driven in the dog-cart by Hume, "as Miss Tremlett will not go," said my uncle grimly, "else that was *her* appointed place." Did not Lotty glare, and did not I choke! and my uncle sitting with mamma, and Minnie, and Aunt Julia in the carriage as sweet to them as ever, perhaps more so, but to me—I could not help thinking of the old saying, "If looks could kill!"

I was very nearly crying as they drove away; but I thought that would be too absurd, so I pressed back my tears and ran to Uncle Robert, and made the poor dear as happy as—as I was wretched.

When they came back Uncle Tremlett would not speak to me, and the next day mamma said something about his taking away what might be considered my share of the allowance he made her, and my going out as a governess. He would not let Hume Cardew speak to me either, but told him off to Cousin Lotty whenever he could, while he fondled her and Minnie ostentatiously, and never so much as looked at me. I was very sorry, for I had an odd kind of liking for him; not the tender love I had for Uncle Robert, but a mixture of gratitude and fear and respect. I did not like his being so angry with me. But because he had all the money I could not even try to make friends with him for fear of being misinterpreted. As it was, I was once almost put in the wrong when I was going to do a little service for him, he not being in the room, and Cousin Lotty took the chair from me, saying, in her half-French way, "Ma chère, you cannot hold with the hare and hunt with the hounds. You have chosen your parti, and you must content yourself now without Uncle Tremlett's money!"

And I am sure that he heard her, for he was at the door when she spoke, and came into the room before she had quite finished.

I was much astonished that Uncle Tremlett should have shown so much displeasure for such a trifling act of disobedience; if even you can call it so: I do not; for I do not think I owed him so very much obedience. I did not then know that if poor Uncle Robert feared him, he hated Uncle Robert as people do hate those whom they have injured. He had injured him for life, ruined his propects, destroyed his intellect, and of course he hated him; and now he hated me for having dared to do him a kindness against his own, as he thought, superior wish. He could not get over it, and did he not make me suffer!

The most painful thing, however, at this time, was his behaviour to me about Hume. When they first came he had thrown us together so much that I was often made quite uncomfortable, it was so marked, besides making Aunt Julia and Cousin Lotty furious with me; but now he would not let him come near me, if he could help it; and I must say I did feel in disgrace when I saw Hume forbidden to speak to me, as if I was something bad and wicked, while Lotty was put forward for everything, and Uncle Tremlett was never happy if Hume was half a minute away from her. "Hume, your Cousin Lotty wants you;" "Take your Cousin Lotty, boy;" "What lovely hair that Cousin Lotty of yours has, and what a sweet, obliging disposition!"

Every word of praise of Lotty seemed somehow to tell as blame of me, and I was more miserable than I care now to remember. But Hume was not quite the cipher Uncle Tremlett wanted him to be; and though, as he owed him everything and as much if not more duty than a real son, he did all he could to please him, yet he had too much self-respect to be a slave or unjust; and he would not hurt me by anything like neglect, though he could not, if he had wished it, pay me too much attention.

One day he met me alone in the garden. I had been crying, because I was very unhappy. Uncle Tremlett had been speaking at me all the morning, saying to Cousin Lotty how much he admired her sweet manner, and how he disliked pert, self-willed girls, and how he hoped that when Hume married (Hume was not in the room) he would marry a girl who had her temper under control, and understood the grace of obedience, and was well-mannered, had been abroad, and had fair hair; in fact Cousin Lotty herself.

And then he said, "It will be a good thing for the girl whoever she may be; for if Hume marries with my consent he will inherit as a son would; if without it, not a shilling!"

And then Lotty laughed quietly, and looked at me with her eyes half shut and very green.

Of course it was nothing to me whom Hume Cardew married; but I was hurt at Uncle Tremlett's unkindness, and cried accordingly. When Hume met me he seemed much distressed to see my red eyes, and I was quite as much ashamed to show them. Besides I could not tell him why I was so unhappy. It looked so babyish to go away and cry because one's uncle was cross. I was comforted however after this meeting, for Hume was so kind, so good; and there was something in his manner different from his usual way of speaking to me. I cannot explain exactly what it was, but I don't think he would have spoken to Cousin Lotty as he did to me. I remember to this hour his look when he took my hand in both of his, and said, "Don't be down-hearted, my little cousin. All will

come right in time, better than we dare to hope now, either of us."

I puzzled myself greatly over this speech. Who did he mean by us? and what were we to dare to hope? However, his words and manner made me much happier than I had been for many days, and I think they all noticed the change in me; and I think too, that both Lotty and Uncle Tremlett suspected it had something to do with Hume, for he suddenly got almost as cross to Hume as he was to myself, and Cousin Lotty was really too horrid, in the way in which she snubbed me, and flattered both him and Hume.

A few days after this Uncle Tremlett became very ill. No one knew what was the matter with him at first, but we all saw that it was something very dreadful. We were far away from any town and could get no one to nurse him. Mamma, an invalid herself, and poor little Minnie were of course unfit; Aunt Julia and Cousin Lotty were as helpless as two babies in a sick-room; one could not let Hume take up an office that seemed so entirely suited for women; so there was really only myself to undertake the charge. And as poor Uncle Tremlett was very ill indeed, it did not much signify who it was, so long as there was some one to attend to him quietly, and see that everything went right. So I installed myself head nurse, and Cousin Lotty laughed at me to Hume, and said I was making a fuss, and that I did it to show off. I don't quite see where the show-off was!

When the doctor came he looked rather grave at us all, and on the second visit he told us that Uncle Tremlett had small-pox. You may imagine the despair and consternation of the house. Aunt Julia and Cousin Lotty left at once; they never waited even for the carriage to be sent, but went away as if the place was besieged. The doctor ordered mamma and Minnie away; but Uncle Robert, who had an obstinate fit on him, would not stir; and Hume too remained: I too. There was no one else to attend to the house or the poor dear invalid, at least for the first day or so, until we could get a nurse from London; and as I had already been under fire I had got all the damage I could, and of course could not go to mamma for fear of carrying the infection with me. There was nothing for it then but to stay at home and make the best of it. And the doctor said I did my part very well, and nursed as if I had been used to it. And Hume was satisfied with me also: which was a comfort, as he was Uncle Tremlett's son—or like his son.

The disease ran its course, and uncle did not die of it, but he did not get well. I do not know what else went wrong, but something did, and he got weaker and weaker instead of better when the fever and the spots went away. One day it seemed as if he could not live many hours. He was very, very weak, but quite sensible; and he called me to him, and asked me to forgive him for his harshness. I thought my heart would have broken, and yet I dared not show that I felt anything, for fear of agitating him. All I could say was, "Don't dear uncle, don't! You were right to show you were displeased with me, if I vexed you, though I did not mean it."

"No, I was not right, little dear," he said, very tenderly, very faintly. "I would not have minded but for the old hate. Any one else but him!"

I did not know what he meant, so could only stand smoothing his wasted hand, and trying my best to calm him. But I learnt afterwards that he meant Uncle Robert, and that it was that sad old story he was alluding to, which I will tell you presently.

After a long time of silence, the poor dear opened his eyes again, and said: "I wanted Hume to like you, Emmy. I liked you at the first; and if *her* son had married my niece, it would have pleased me. I did what I could, and now I fear it is too late. I made him take to Julia's daughter instead."

I looked down at this. I thought that if this was all his sorrow, poor man, he might soon be comforted; for Hume had told me that he didn't like Cousin Lotty, and I pitied her when he said that. I did not pity myself when he added that he did like me. However, this was not a time to think of one's own happiness, so I said nothing of it, but petted uncle a little, and quieted him, and then he went to sleep; and Hume came in and sat with me, watching him.

The next day he was even weaker, and I was really afraid to be left alone with him, expecting he would die on my hands; but the nurse said he would not, and went to lie down, and so I sat and waited and watched.

Suddenly he opened his eyes, and asked for Uncle Robert. I was frightened but of course obeyed him, and went to the door to call a servant. Here I stumbled over Hume. He had been waiting in his own room, which was close to uncle's, to be at hand if he was wanted; and he volunteered to go for Uncle Robert, though he had never seen him yet. For all the time that he and Uncle Tremlett had been with us,

Uncle Robert had shut himself up as I told you, going out only at dead of night when every one else was in bed; so he had not seen or been seen by either. Hume nevertheless went to summon him; and presently I heard a scream, and then a loud sobbing. I dared not leave the dying man, though I was in torture, afraid of Uncle Robert and for Hume: indeed, I did not know what I was afraid of. But after a long time of mingled sobs and a soothing, low, kindly voice—Hume's—I heard footsteps coming up the stairs, and Uncle Robert appeared, leaning on Hume and looking up into his face with that expression in his own which meant "seeing angels"—the sweet old raptness back again. They both came to the bed, Hume all amazement, uncle all mild ecstasy and radiance, Uncle Tremlett lying like a man already dead, quite still and as if breathless, his small pinched face and wasted hands looking so pitiful, so heart-breaking!

Neither of my uncles looked at each other.

"That is right," said Mr. Tremlett faintly, not opening his eyes. He seemed to know everything now without seeing it.

"And he is *her* son?" breathed Uncle Robert, he too not looking at his ancient foe, but at Hume.

"Yes," said Mr. Tremlett, "and since his death, and hers, mine."

"Mine too," said Uncle Robert with his sweet vague smile.

Poor Hume! I thought he was more than a little embarrassed at this reduplication of fathers; but he was very tender and good to the dear crazed brain.

Then Uncle Tremlett made a faint movement with his feeble hand.

"Shake hands before I die," he gasped, "and say you forgive me, Robert."

"I forgive you, from my soul, James. Why not? Is She not always with me?" said Uncle Robert smiling, but the tears were fast falling from his eyes, though they had their ecstatic look too.

"Hume, my boy, my Mabel's son, your hand," said poor Uncle Tremlett, yet more feebly; "yours, Emmy, little angel-girl."

We put our hands into his, he joined them, and his lips murmured, "God bless you."

He smiled and looked pleased when Hume leaned over me, and took me to him and kissed me.

I can tell you no more; there was something very dreadful then—a noise, a something; don't ask me what: all I know is, that I found myself on the sofa some time late in the evening, with the nurse and doctor, and Uncle Robert, and Hume—my Hume—all about me, and I very ill, and feeling very odd. But I did not have small-pox, only a kind of nervous attack that did not last long; and when I recovered, well! I would have gone through a hundred times as much to be so happy!

So this is exactly how it happened; and in no other way. Aunt Julia and Cousin Lotty at the first cut me, but now that I am married they have thought better of it, and have come round to me again; and I forgive them all they said of me. They certainly did say awful things; and Lotty, once, more than hinted that I had poisoned Uncle Tremlett that I might marry Hume, whom he would have disinherited if I had while he was alive, and whom he had expressly forbidden to think of me, "having other views for him." But I knew that was not true. Hume, the son of the only woman he had ever loved, or that Uncle Robert had ever loved, and whom he had induced to break off her engagement with Uncle Robert in the hope of winning her to himself—but you see he did not, for she married Mr. Cardew instead—Hume was destined for me from that first evening, if he would take as strong a liking to me as Mr. Tremlett himself did. For, being Uncle Robert's favourite niece, it seemed in some way to atone for his base conduct to him in those early years, at least in his own mind; and I knew that he died happier reconciled to his old victim, and leaving one of mamma's daughters, and his niece, safe with Hume as his promised wife, and consequent heiress to his own fortune.

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THE DOCTOR'S MIXTURE.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER XXII. THE DOCTOR SCORES.

WITH the morning that battle would begin.

The patient was a little better, but still in acute agony. His eyes again sought Katey, and his hand closed on hers; and when the figure of Mrs. Leader appeared at the other side, an air of trouble came into them. All that day he groaned and gasped, and occasionally dozed. Mrs. Leader was perpetually coming in — always on the watch. The Doctor's deputy—for so she considered Katey—could not be disturbed from her position out of consideration for the sick man. There was a twinkle of triumph in the Doctor's eyes as he looked towards Mrs. Leader, reminding her of what he had said last night, that he and his daughter should stay or go together.

At night, with a dull lamp burning, Katey still kept her watch. Mrs. Leader had insisted on relieving her; but the sick man grew troubled, and once more she had to send for the poor girl and restore her to her post. This fretted the lady of the house, and she again determined that the moment her husband was at all better, ejectment should take place; already, feeling her inferiority in numbers and perhaps strength, she had written to her brother to come back with all speed. The fashionable friends were still there, but had fixed a day for their departure. The Doctor had already not only softened Lady Seaman towards himself by his own agreeable gifts, but in her presence had given a warning speech to her son.

"While I'm here, my lord, the little homestead is as shut up as a prison. No admission except on business. We're the most particular family in the parish; so mind, if you want to offend me, you'll go on paying visits there." This was said in a very stern and decided way, and the young man understood perfectly by that time that the Doctor was not a man to be trifled with. Lady Seaman, therefore, credited him with sincerity, and was his friend.

Now arrived Doctor Speed again; who inspected, felt, reflected; said "no doubt" many times, and declined to give any opinion till he was down in the drawing-room, when he announced that "the malady was taking its course." He could say nothing decisive. Meanwhile he had brought down Mr. Macfarlane, a short, keen-eyed, wiry Scot, with an elderly head on young shoulders, who was all "in his (Doctor Speed's) mind," and who would see that everything was carried out as he directed.

"Then," said Mrs. Leader, eagerly, "I suppose Doctor Findlater need not remain *now?*"

"Not unless you wish it," said the doctor, dryly.

"Quite so," said Peter; "then I resign all responsibility over to the new physician. Well and good! Well and good!"

"Quite so," said Doctor Speed, whose face seemed to say, "Well and better."

He was to remain as usual till about five or six o'clock. There was certainly an improvement in the patient: he could speak with less pain. Our Doctor went in to him.

"My dear sir," he said, "you're not to talk, but to listen—mind now. I've come to tell you, Mrs. Leader has got a brand-new doctor for you, vice myself, resigned—and who'll take care of you far better, though he is only half my age. Her brother, too, Mr. Randall, will be here to-night, so you'll have none but friends about you."

Mr. Leader put up his jaundiced face, and, in a husky whisper, said: "But she's not to leave me—Katey?"

"Oh, all in good time—by-and-bye. I fear I couldn't leave her in this house. She goes with me."

A strange look of pain and worry came into his face, and he whispered, anxiously:

"Don't, oh don't let her leave me!"

"Now don't distress yourself. The new doctors say you're not to." And having thus "sown the good seed," the Doctor went down-stairs. He met Mrs. Leader, who was just coming up, a little uneasy.

"You see I'm going. But if you want me back again you must come for me."

She turned scornfully from him.

"And I'm taking my child with me. I'll not leave her to the cruel mercies of certain parties, now that her sole friend and protector in the house is laid low," added the Doctor. "I wish you good morning, ma'am."

Mrs. Leader was a good deal disturbed at this too ready compliance. She knew there must be "schemes" behind it. But still the delight at getting rid of Katey overpowered all other considerations.

But when the London doctor went up to the patient, about three o'clock, he found him worse, much flushed and agitated. His quick eye soon discerned that something had gone wrong. He bent his head to listen to the patient, who was saying:

"She must not go. Don't let them send her away."

"Certainly not. Some servant no doubt. What is her name?"

"Katey, to be sure. Don't let her leave me."

The doctor ascertained who Katey was. He sought her, and said to her gravely that he hoped she was not going away.

"I have to go. My father requires it. He has been offended at the treatment he receives here."

"Well, he may go: but there is no reason that you should. No matter; I'll speak to Mrs. Leader."

He walked boldly into that lady's boudoir.

"We must not let this lady leave," he said; "it is essential that she should stay—mind, essential."

"But she will go; her father insists on it. I am sure I don't want her to do so——"

"Mr. Leader will fret himself into a relapse. It must be done, that's all about it. I am astonished that any difficulty can be made. You have had some family differences, I suppose?"

"It is not I, indeed. Her father insists on her following him."

"Yes, I see; to spite the family—I understand. Well, you must get him back, that's all about it."

"Never!" said the lady. "He is a low, ignorant fellow."

"Oh, nonsense! I tell you he must be got back, or I give up the case, and your husband will die in twenty-four hours."

Mary Leader was at the moment in the doorway, and entered impetuously:

"Of course it shall be done. If Katey will not stay without her father—and I hardly wonder at it after the treatment he has received—he must be sent for. Shall I order the carriage at once?"

Mrs. Leader was quite borne down by this vehemence.

"Of course," she said, "Doctor Speed, whatever is necessary for his state—though I can hardly believe that it turns on a man, whom you have such a poor opinion of, being in the house."

"My good madam, this is a plain matter of common sense: we are only wasting time. Order the horses at once."

Mary sat down without a word and wrote, sending the brougham with the letter. In due time it returned.

"There," said Doctor Speed, who had been soothing his patient, "she is not to go. For here is her father back again."

But no, it was only a reply to the note.

Doctor Findlater presents his compliments to Miss Leader, and begs that she will remind Mrs. Leader of what he said, on leaving Leadersfort, as to the sole terms on which he can consent to return.

N.B. He is expecting his daughter, Mrs. Cecil Leader. He hopes that she will not be detained.

Mary handed it to the physician. "I don't understand it," she said.

"Perhaps I do, Miss Leader," he said. "I hardly wonder at the man's standing back. What does all this mean, Mrs. Leader?"

She read impatiently. "Some more of his impertinence! It is unbearable. I'll not submit to it. Let her go, then!"

He shook his head. "Oh, we can't trifle with these cases. Now please do whatever is necessary."

"What! go myself and fetch him? Never!"

The doctor smiled. "Well, that *is* a little too much. But if he won't come otherwise—suppose you go, Miss Leader."

Without a word that young lady went down to the carriage, and drove away.

When Peter, looking round the edge of his curtain, saw the "petticoat," he danced a regular jig, or even war-dance, but was much taken back when Mary entered.

"Now, Doctor Findlater," she said, "I want you to be good-natured and reasonable, and to do something for *me*. You are too sensible to think of pushing your advantage further. Come back with me, won't you, as a favour?"

The Doctor looked at her with a comic smile. "I see," he said. "Well, here goes." And he went down with her, got into the carriage, and then drove away. The Doctor was really good-natured and sensible, and, if thus appealed to, was not likely to press his advantage too far. But he reserved a little stroke, in petto, for the time he should meet Mrs. Leader.

CHAPTER XXIII. BY THE BEDSIDE.

Up drove the brougham. The Doctor descended triumphantly, and was preceded in by his captor. There, in the dining-room, were Doctor Speed and all the august party assembled at a very late lunch, or early dinner. It was intensely gratifying to his "amoor proper."

"I declare I am as good as a noble Roman," he said, as the servants prepared a seat for him, and he unfolded his napkin. "No one can call me a Shylock after this, or say I was insisting on my bond." And he looked straight at Mrs. Leader. That lady took no notice. He went on: "I declare! To think that *I* should be prescribed, as a prescription at my time of life. Why, it beats the Encumbered Estates Court."

The London doctor listened quite amused. He was coming round to like this Doctor Findlater, who, notwithstanding all the dismal circumstances, was exceedingly entertaining, and told some of his best stories. Mrs. Leader listened, silent and cold. She was looking forward, in thought, and in troubled thought, to what was to come of all this.

At last the London doctor went up to have another look at his patient, whom he pronounced to be neither advancing nor going back—to the family; but to his confrères, Mr. Macfarlane and Doctor Findlater, he repeated his old verdict: "I doubt if the man can hold on. It will spread to the heart, and then the liver complication—however, go on with the treatment." He then departed, crumpling up a little slip of paper, which Mrs. Leader presented to him, and which was his second cheque for one hundred pounds.

Now the reserved, canny Mr. Macfarlane came into office; a man that economised his words and thoughts as he did his shillings; and thought before he spoke whether you were worth expending so much "pheezical exartion" upon. The Doctor, on that night, painfully studied him, to see how he could be approached, but could make nothing of him — a "dried-up, flaky, unsympathetic chip." But from that hour the Doctor did not flag, and laid himself out, with a patient and untiring energy, to discover the weak place. Determined, however, as he said, to give "a handsome quid" in return for the quo extended to him in the shape of house-room and entertainment, the Doctor exerted himself energetically, and, with all his powers of entertainment, rendered himself quite a popular character with the guests, and Lady Seaman smiled languidly, but approvingly, at his quips, stories, and repartees. The young lord was dull and sulky; he did not understand the Doctor's altered manner, who seemed to be half sneering, half laughing at him.

It would be disagreeable to dwell much on the stages of that long sickness. In truth, Doctor Speed had tolerably correctly summed up the matter. "The man can't last." But all through he seemed to cling to Katey, and he was never easy or tranquil but when she was near him, reading to him. Mrs. Leader said nothing all that evening, and seemed to accept the situation. But she was expecting relief; and next morning Mr. Randall Morrison was found, by those who came down late, seated at the breakfast-table. The Doctor gave a little start, and Mr. Randall looked at him with a smiling nod, as who should say, "We are now going to change matters."

On the ladies going away, this gentleman spoke to the Doctor, and others that remained, in a quiet, confidential, but assured fashion. "You see, with so many people in the house, all about this poor invalid, we must really establish some order, and regularity, and subordination. Now, we have thought it best, Mrs. Leader and I, that as you and Mr. Macfarlane are the physicians, you should have control-in-chief, and decide on Mr. Leader's state—whether he is fit to see people, or whether he is likely to be tired of seeing people, and other matters of that sort. There must, of

course, be no disputing what you decide. I am sure you see the propriety of that, Doctor Findlater."

"Oh, I never undertake to decide what is or what is not propriety. There are such contradictory opinions. But I warn you not to be crossing the grain of the sick man, or fretting him. Mr. Macfarlane can tell you what happened yesterday. And then Doctor Speed laid down a different principle altogether. But that's neither here nor there, of course."

Mr. Morrison stared at him. "You are hardly right," he said. "We have to do with what is here; nothing, of course, with what is *there*. However, this is the determination we have arrived at, and I am sure every one here will co-operate with me in carrying it out."

The dry Scotch doctor was allotted a little room off Mr. Leader's, which became a sort of sentry-box, where he kept guard over the patient. Katey alone was allowed the entrée, and could come and go as she pleased without challenge.

It was late one night, towards eleven o'clock, after the patient had had a restless, uneasy day, when Mrs. Leader had passed in and out a good deal. Katey had been reading and talking to him all the greater part of the day, and had come on duty again at ten o'clock, after a hasty rush into the town, to look after things there. Mr. Leader, "grown as yellow as an Australian sovereign," stupefied with violent jaundice, had been dozing and dreaming, while Katey watched.

How many things had she to think of in that lonely vigil—the secret, desperate schemes that she knew were being hatched against her and her husband, the responsibility of duty towards her father, whose next extravagance she began to be doubtful about, to say nothing of the strange rumours that were spreading through Tilston of discoveries, and of strange stories, to be revealed by-and-bye. Then, there was her sister Polly—a bright, but foolish child; and she recalled her light manner, and how often in her visits she had found her sitting with that dangerous Captain Molyneux, and whom she longed to see married to some steady man, and placed out of harm's way. Never were so many cares on so young a head.

As she thought and thought she heard the sick man groan, and, looking round, became conscious that his eyes were fixed upon her. He caught her by the wrist.

"That is you, my dearest Katey. Where have you been? Why did you not come before?"

"I have been here, dear Mr. Leader, for the last two hours."

"Then don't leave me again! I wish to do what is right. God knows I do. But I cannot stand their persecution longer. They wear me to death."

"Who, dear Mr. Leader?"

"Oh, you know—he and she. They intimidate me. All this weary day they have been at me. Why don't you save me from them? They want to destroy me here and hereafter, and, oh Katey, I fear they will make me do it!"

"Don't distress yourself. Now, you promised me you would not," said the amiable Katey, who never even thought of indulging her curiosity, and asking what it was they were to make him do.

"If I have only strength left me," he went on, "they shall never prevail on me to do what is wrong. Never. But I am so weak and shaken; and there is the danger."

"Don't think of it any more to-night," she said, soothing him.

"But they will come again to-morrow, arguing and imploring of me to do this. I cannot stand it. As it is, my soul is tortured for what I have done."

At last Katey said: "But what is this thing that is so dreadful?"

"You know very well. Surely there is no danger of my life—the doctors don't say so. I have suffered a great deal, and it would be very hard——I will *not* do it," he said, vehemently. "I will not damn my soul, and leave an injustice after me by leaving my own son a beggar."

"Poor Cecil!" said Katey. "He has done nothing to deserve this persecution."

"But I want—I want," said the sick man, raising himself, and beating his pillow passionately, "I want to be saved for the future. Who can keep them from me? They will come again and again, I know they will. I want to undo the mischief I have done, and you must stand by and help me, Katey. But they are all too strong for me."

"Indeed, no," said Katey. "You are only agitating yourself. Never think of us to-night, at least. To-morrow papa will do something."

"But if they persuade me. I am so weak now. If they begin it again. I cannot be always struggling. They are too many for me. Suppose," he added, with a sort of piteous earnestness, "suppose they

should force me to this, would you think me the most wretched, basest creature? But be indulgent—what *can* I do?" .

"Do!" said Katey; "do what your own conscience tells you is right, and nothing against that. It is hard for me to speak on such a subject; but if you ask me, I might say that there has been enough done in the way of severity to poor Cecil."

"But not more than he deserved. You don't say that I have acted wickedly or unfairly? You know that he went against me, defied my authority. I should mark it to him in some way."

"But it was a heavy punishment for the offence, if such it was. Disinherited, disgraced, beggared! And all this—forgive me, dear sir, if I say this—I know, *not* from your own heart, or on account of any anger you might have, but because it was urged, cruelly urged, upon you."

He turned away his face restlessly.

"Yes," she went on, growing more excited; "your heart was too good, too generous, to feel any bitterness, or to magnify *that* into an injury. Nor do I so much accuse others, but only consider this—she was not his mother, and could not have a parent's feelings. Such a one, and her friends, would naturally look to their own interest, and take a far harsher view than a father would."

"Well done, my little pleader," would her father have exclaimed had he been listening; and even the manner, sweet and earnest, was more irresistible than the matter. Her little speech, after all no more than a remonstrance, had a vast effect.

"Don't think too hardly of me," he said; "when I recover I shall repair all. As it is, Cecil is taken care of. And they shall get me to do nothing more—never. Only if I had some support. But I shall make up for the past."

After that he at last got to rest, while Katey continued her watch, half excited, half fearful of her own boldness, and thinking that she had spoken too much, and gone too far.

Mr. Randall Morrison brought about a great change in the tone of the house. He introduced a steady resolution, and quite took the command. The Doctor he seemed to be always confronting, with "a cold eye," and a hostile watchfulness; and it was curious to see how completely Doctor Findlater dropped his jovial bantering in the presence of this enemy: feeling clearly that it was of no use, and superfluous. Mr. Morrison seemed to establish a sort of understanding that it was by his permission, or at least approbation, that all access to Mr. Leader's room was tolerated. And he even seemed to require an account of the business that brought any one there.

Doctor Findlater secretly resented this behaviour, and often said to himself. "Bide your time, Fin! bide your time, my boy!" A very efficient ally in this "police work," as the Doctor would call it, was the Scotch Doctor Macfarlane, who seemed to grow every hour more close and impenetrable. The Doctor tried him in every conceivable way, with good stories, jokes, deferential asking of an opinion; still more deferential adopting of an opinion; but all in vain — a grim smile was the highest result. Yet, with a buoyant effrontery, the Doctor never would accept these rebuffs; but under shelter of his daughter, would enter the sick-room, and sit there cheering the patient. The unhappy Mr. Leader remained, for a time at least, without getting better, or at least without getting much worse. Sometimes he was dull and stupefied, as the heavy humours of his illness mounted to his head, sometimes cross and peevish to a degree—sometimes troubled as to the state of his soul. The Doctor tried to cheer him; but after he had been with him about two or three minutes the Scotch "superintendent" entered and feared that "they were fatiguing the patient," and grew imperative, and the Doctor had to go out. Nothing would soften that cold, thorny nature.

A STRING OF GHOST STORIES.

The writer has, in common with many others, great curiosity in all matters connected with the supernatural.

Without desiring to prove logically that it is often more difficult to doubt than to believe, the writer cultivates a mind in abeyance, ready to believe what is supernatural, on the same proofs, and with the same faith, as what is natural.

Direct ocular evidence, or the strongest circumstantial evidence, being the rule in courts of law, nothing is hereafter stated on the warrant of the writer that would not be considered good legal evidence. The facts come direct from the witnesses themselves, and were by them related to the writer.

Sir W. S. was a general officer, well known in the Indian service. He died

lately at Florence. His widow is alive, and she related what follows:

They had been living for many years in India, with a sister, to whom Lady S. was tenderly attached. Both had arranged to return to England about the same time, but Lady S. left first, much against her wish. Her sister was to follow as soon as possible. On reaching England, Lady S. anxiously looked for letters with news of her sister's plans. In this state of anxiety she dreamt one night that her sister appeared before her, in long white trailing clothes, dripping with wet, her face ghastly pale, her fair hair, which was remarkably long and beautiful, falling around her, save on the right side of her head, which was closely cut.

The dream was so shocking, and so distinct, that Lady S. became greatly alarmed. She carefully noted the date of its occurrence. Her anxiety to receive letters increased. They came at last. Her sister had embarked shortly after her, and died at sea. By her own request a portion of her beautiful hair was cut off before she died, to be sent to Lady S. She was buried at sea at the precise hour of Lady S.'s dream.

Captain Campbell, of S., is well known as a spirited writer on Indian field sports. He and his wife were staying with me in the Highlands of Argyleshire, when he related the following circumstances:

S. Castle, his family place, stands on the coast of Kintyre, that wildest part of Argyleshire facing the sea. It is a regular feudal stronghold, small, square-turreted, placed on a pile of rocks, lapped by the sea. Behind rise barren hills in long monotonous lines, broken below into grass-fields, divided by walls, or dykes, as they are called in Scotland. There are no trees, nothing but the clouds, the hills, and the sea. Under the old castle, along the shore, nestle a few grey hovels. These, with the grey castle above, form the village of S.; a place that, even in summer, chills one with its suggestive look of wintry blasts and roaring sea storms.

One special autumn morning Captain Campbell started to shoot grouse on the moors far away beyond the hills. His path lay along the shore by a little pier and a low wall raised as a barrier to the waves. Under this wall lay moored the fishing-boats of his tenants, who, on the borders of Loch Fyne, look to the famous herrings of those waters for their support.

As he passed this low wall he saw four men, well known to him, preparing their nets for a start. The day was boisterous, the wind moaned along the shore, and the white-crested waves rode in, angrily striking against the wall. Captain Campbell halted for a few moments to speak to the men and to wish them a good haul.

All day he was out on the moors, inland. The wind had risen, and stormy gusts of rain swept over the water and the land. As he returned he again took the coast road, although it was further round. He felt, he said, a strange necessity to do so, he could not explain to himself at the time. The sea was now very rough and lashing furiously against the low wall; the sun was setting in a bank of lurid clouds opposite. Leaning against the wall, as if resting, the sickly sunshine lighting up distinctly their forms and faces, which he fully recognised, he saw the same four men with whom he had spoken in the morning. Being late, he did not stop, but merely bade them good-night in passing, and scarcely noticed that they neither raised their caps, nor replied to him.

As he entered the enclosed court of the castle, his wife ran out to meet him, exclaiming, "Oh, Campbell, how thankful I am you are returned! The most dreadful accident has happened. The boat, with So-and-so on board (naming the four men he had just seen), has capsized in a sudden squall near the shore, lower down; they are all drowned, and their poor wives are almost mad with grief!"

"Impossible, my dear!" replied Captain Campbell; "I have this instant seen those very men by the low wall at the jetty."

"Seen them!" cried she. "It is but an hour ago their bodies began to drift on the beach, and one still is missing, but the morning tide is expected to bring it in! As the boat capsized in the bay it was all distinctly seen by the watchers."

Then Captain Campbell understood that the forms he had seen were the wraiths of the drowned men, standing there to bid good-bye to the laird, and he went down to the village to comfort the widows.

At Walton-on-Thames, close to the river, was a villa, long the property of the T. family. It was the favourite residence of a certain eccentric countess of that house, known as "the bad countess," who was so fond of the place that, being of a violent and strange temper, she declared that she would, after her death, haunt the house should any

one dare to destroy or alter it, specially should they meddle with her own private room. In the course of years the villa was sold to wealthy people, who entirely disapproved of its small size and gloomy rooms, and, unmindful or ignorant of the threats of Lady T., pulled down most of the old house, and built a very fine modern mansion in its place. This family, immensely rich, whom we will call S. R., were happy, merry people, with many sons and daughters, happy and merry also. Visitors always filled the house; the rooms were large and spacious, the furniture new and showy; in fact, it was the very last place in the world to be connected with the supernatural. Yet, very soon after the new villa was built, Mrs. S. R., the mistress of the house, came to be aware that a particular bedroom, forming part of the old house, was haunted by the countess on one special day of the year. Year after year the same appearance of a little old woman, strangely dressed, occurred to different visitors occupying this room, until Mrs. S. R. could not doubt the fact. The room was, of course, used as little as possible, but, one day, some American friends landing unexpectedly, and making a sudden visit to Walton, were, for want of space, placed in it. In the night, before the fire had gone out, the husband and wife were aroused by the door opening, and an old woman appearing, dressed in an antique costume. She crossed the room, stood for some time looking at the bed, and then disappeared before either of them could follow her. Not in the least prepared for a ghostly visitor, the Americans got up, and tried to trace the figure, but quite in vain. The next morning they asked Mrs. S. R. who could possibly have entered their room in the middle of the night, describing the strange dress and appearance of the visitor. Mrs. S. R. started and turned pale. She remembered that very night was the date of the yearly appearance of Lady T., which, in the sudden arrival of her friends, she had forgotten.

The following incident occurred in Rutlandshire about twenty years ago, and was related to the writer by the wife of one of our bishops:

Mr. and Mrs. E. were then young people, and the future episcopus was glad to accept a country curacy near his father's residence. A small house was taken in the parish on a four years' lease. After six months' residence, Mrs. E. one Sunday morning accidentally remained at home during church hours, and was sitting in her bedroom. All the household had gone to church save the cook, who was in a distant part of the house, cooking. Under Mrs. E.'s bedroom was a drawing-room, which was only partially furnished, and therefore rarely used. It was at that time locked up, the windows fastened, the shutters shut, and the blinds drawn down. Suddenly Mrs. E. was disturbed by hearing a confusion of noises in the room below; the door slammed repeatedly, the windows thrown up and down, the blinds noisily pulled, the furniture drawn about the room, in fact, every evidence of the presence of a large and noisy party. Mrs. E. at once rang the bell, which was duly answered by the cook.

"Who on earth is in the room below? Who has unlocked the door?" she inquired.

"No one, ma'am," replied the cook; "no one is in the house but myself, and I am busy in the kitchen."

"Impossible, go down and see; there is a large party in the drawing-room."

The cook went and returned.

"The door, ma'am, was locked; I unfastened it; the windows and shutters are shut, the blinds down, the furniture unmoved."

Mrs. E. dismissed the cook, and pondered.

Some time after this she sat more in the drawing-room, the season being summer. When alone there she heard the same noises in the room overhead, that is, in her bedroom; chairs were dragged about, the fire (when there were no coals in the grate) violently poked, and the sound of feet were plainly audible walking in and about the room. Mrs. E. had not the courage to investigate these noises as the cook had done, but when she did go to her room everything was in its accustomed place.

At first these noises were of rare occurrence; as time went on hardly a week elapsed without their occurrence, and Mrs. E., though by no means a nervous woman, felt really uncomfortable. Noises, too, came to be heard in other parts of the house, and the servants became alarmed. There was a small room, intended for a schoolroom, near the offices, where the servants sat; at one end was a window and on the left side a door; along the window side of the wall a curtain, drawn at night, covered both window and wall. The servants were sitting in this room one evening by candlelight, when the curtain rustled in a manner to draw their attention, and as they looked,

behind it was distinctly seen by all the impress of a form, passing between the curtain and the wall, and holding off the curtain by the left arm. As this unseen form passed the opening of the curtains a hand appeared for an instant on the dark stuff, and a moment after all those present were conscious that a something which rustled in moving had passed out of the room by the door from the curtain, and that the room on that side become intensely cold. The servants all saw and heard this visitation. The lease of the house being nearly ended, the E.'s left it. Mrs. E. says that nothing would have induced her to remain there any longer, for that both her husband and herself believed that the house was haunted.

The writer cannot of course guarantee what the servants saw; but, as forming a sequel to Mrs. E.'s story, it has been related.

What follows is given in the words of the lady herself, Miss Jones, now Mrs. Harford, of Stapleton Manor-house, near Bristol.

"I live in a large, rambling, old house in the country, built some time in the fourteenth century, according to a date found on an old beam in the roof some years ago by a workman who was employed to repair it. The two lower floors are wainscoted, and a blow on the walls causes a hollow sound, suggestive of places of concealment, which doubtless would be discovered if the panels were removed. The house has the character of being haunted. Indeed, strange and unaccountable noises are at times heard in various parts of it. Singular lights have also been seen, not only by the domestics, but by visitors. I shall, however, confine myself to one instance, of which I was a spectator. The bedroom, which I still occupy, where this circumstance took place, is on the third floor. It is a large room with bow windows, and at that time contained two beds. An invalid sister and I shared the larger, and another sister occupied the smaller bed. We always burned a night-light in the room. At the end of October, in the year 1854, I was one night awakened suddenly by some noise, and being perfectly awake, I saw a female figure pass slowly across the foot of the bed, going towards the windows. It moved so deliberately, that I had time to consider who it could be, while it was before my eyes. A slight figure, and a fair sad face, dressed in a white cap, and apparently a white night-dress. It was sufficiently like the sister in my bed to make me think it was she, as I had no idea of its being anything supernatural; and I only thought she was taken ill. But I checked the intention I felt at first to speak to her, as she had a great dislike to being watched, and turned round, not to have the appearance of doing so, when to my surprise and alarm I saw her calmly sleeping by my side. I then got immediately out of bed, and carefully searched the room. The door was bolted, and I looked behind the curtains. This room is papered, and there was no place of concealment where any one could hide. I then saw that my other sister also was quietly sleeping. I did not like to wake my sisters, fearing to alarm the invalid, but I mentioned the circumstance the next day, though, of course, no one could offer any suggestion on the subject, as none but myself had seen the figure. Some years afterwards I again saw the same apparition standing by my bed, and apparently gazing at me. I was then alone, and immediately started up, when it disappeared.

"I afterwards heard that a new servant, who had arrived at the house only the previous night, had seen a similar figure, and I believe on that morning. She had risen a little after five o'clock to get through her work, when she heard a door open near to which she was passing, and saw a female figure dressed in white come out of the door, and pass along the passage leading to my bedroom. It was about five o'clock that I saw the apparition by my bed, but being in February, the morning was still dark. When the housekeeper heard the girl relate the circumstance, she tried to persuade her that she had seen one of the servants coming out of the room; but she persistently declared it did not resemble any one in the house. I have not heard of the same apparition having been seen by any person since that time, though noises still continue to disturb at times the members of our household."

C. Abbey, in Cheshire, the ancestral seat of the C. family, is the next scene to which the writer will invite the reader's attention.

The old part of this fine old mansion has been made into bedrooms and offices, not being in keeping with the splendour of modern requirements. Thus, what used to be called the "coved saloon" was first degraded into a nursery, and is now used as a bedroom. When the late Lord C. grew old, this room, in which he had played as a

child, was occupied by his niece, Miss P., who before her marriage resided in the house. Lady C.'s dressing-room was only divided from the "coved saloon" by a short corridor.

One evening Miss P. was alone dressing for a very late dinner, and as she rose from her toilet-glass to get some article of dress, she saw standing near her bed—a little iron one, placed out in the room away from the wall—the figure of a child dressed in a very quaint frock, with an odd little ruff round its neck. For some moments Miss P. stood and stared, wondering how this strange little creature could have entered her room. The full glare of the candles was upon its face and figure. As she stood looking at it, the child began to run round and round the bed in a wild distressed way, with a look of suffering in its little face.

Miss P., still more and more surprised, walked up to the bed and stretched out her hand, when the child suddenly vanished, how, or where, she did not see, but, apparently, into the floor. She went at once to Lady C.'s room and inquired of her to whom the little girl could belong she had just seen in her room, expressing her belief that it was supernatural, and describing her odd dress and troubled face.

The ladies went down to dinner, for many guests were staying in the house. Lady C. thought and thought over this strange appearance. At last she remembered that Lord C. had told her that one of his earliest recollections was the grief he felt at the sudden death of a little sister of whom he was very fond, fourteen years old. The two children had been playing together in the nursery—the same "coved saloon," running round and round the bed—overnight. In the morning when he woke he was told she had died in the night, and he was taken by one of the nursery-maids to see her laid out on her little bed in the "coved saloon." The sheet placed over her was removed to show him her face. The horror he had felt at the first sight of death made so vivid an impression on him, that in extreme old age he still recalled it. The dress and face of the child, as described by Miss P., agreed precisely with his remembrance of his sister. Both Lady C. and Miss P. related this to the writer.

Dr. Gason, a physician resident at Rome, a very old and esteemed friend, told the writer what follows:

"I was called to attend an English girl in Rome, Miss P., living with her aunt, Mrs. Evans. From the first I saw it was a case that must end fatally. I became greatly interested in my patient, and attended her more as a friend, at last, than as a doctor. When she became worse my wife and I took turns to sit up during part of the night, so as to allow Mrs. Evans to have some hours' rest.

"I was sitting, about two in the morning, in the salon of the apartments occupied by these ladies. Like many small apartments abroad, the bedrooms opened from this central room. On my left was Mrs. Evans's room, where she then lay asleep. On the right was my poor patient's room. Both doors were open to enable me to hear the one, and to call the other. I was sitting in the furthest part of the salon, which was lighted by a lamp. I was as wide awake as I am now. I had just turned up the lamp, thinking that it grew dim, when I saw a figure dressed in white pass out from Mrs. Evans's door into Miss P.'s room. As it slowly moved along the other end of the salon from where I sat, I did not distinctly see the face or features, but the unusual dress, and a shadowy look about the figure, which glided rather than walked, surprised me. I concluded, however, as I sat looking at it in the somewhat dim light, that it must be Mrs. Evans who had gone to look at her poor niece, dressed in some bedroom toilet new to me.

"But, as she did not return, I rose and looked into her door. Mrs. Evans was fast asleep in her bed. I then went into Miss P.'s room, who lay in a troubled doze.

"I was shocked at the sudden change in her appearance since I saw her an hour before. Death was in her face, which had from white turned now to an ashy grey colour. About five o'clock I called up her aunt to take my place.

"On retiring about ten o'clock in the morning, I could not help questioning Mrs. Evans as to whether she had gone late into her niece's room. 'It was not I,' she replied. 'I never moved from the time I lay down until you called me.'

"When I went into Miss P.'s room, she was sinking rapidly. She clasped my hand with all her remaining strength, and began speaking quickly, but very indistinctly. I understood her to say, 'Oh, Dr. Gason, I am so glad you are come—I can die now—I have something to tell you—a white figure in the night—the figure of—— Oh, do try and understand me—the white figure——' These words were repeated

many times; but the poor girl spoke so low, and she breathed with such difficulty, that it was impossible for me to catch her meaning. Most painful was the struggle to tell me what was on her mind. To the last she held my hand, and her lips moved, but no sound came from them, and in half an hour she was dead."

Mrs. P. is a family connexion. She was living with her husband at their country place during the autumn of a certain year. She was in good health, as was her husband; no trouble or agitation harassed her mind; she lived in luxurious ease, rich, quiet, and contented. She is, moreover, rather of a reserved and silent temper, not in the least sensitive, or imaginative, or outward.

Mr. P., a complete country gentleman (and a very affectionate husband, be it said), was in the full enjoyment of the sporting season; he hunted, shot, and fished, and farmed, and gardened; he was, indeed, as jovial as heart could desire.

One memorable day Mr. P. went out early to shoot with two friends. They went to a distant cover, and were not expected back until late, so that Mrs. P. dressed herself for dinner, and sat in the drawing-room, opening from the hall, ready to receive them. There was sufficient light not to require candles before dinner. The gentlemen entered the house by the stables and offices, so that Mrs. P. neither saw nor spoke with her husband until he came down dressed for dinner with his two friends. Mr. P. introduced them to his wife, and they made suitable apologies for being late. While they were sitting round the fire talking, Mrs. P. remembered that she had left her pocket-handkerchief on the toilet-table in her room, and went out to fetch it. The drawing-room led into the hall, and in the hall, opposite the entrance-door, was the principal staircase, large and broad, with a spacious landing half-way up, lighted by high windows. On this staircase Mrs. P. saw a gentleman ascending; his back was towards her. He was dressed in a velvet suit of such a peculiar form and pattern that Mrs. P.'s attention was specially attracted. He slowly mounted the stairs. She paused in the hall to observe him, wondering who he was, and why he was so dressed. As she stood, the gentleman passed into a small dressing-room on the landing, to the right of the large windows, called "the yellow dressing-room." Mrs. P. followed him up-stairs, got her handkerchief, concluded that he was another guest picked up out of doors, and returned to the drawing-room. Mr. P. turned to her, and said, as she entered, "My dear, are we never to have dinner? We are very hungry. Will you not ring the bell?"

"Had you not better," said she, "wait so as to give your other friend a little time to dress? I have just seen him go up-stairs into the yellow dressing-room. He wore such a curious dress. I want you to tell me who he is."

Mr. P. turned very pale, and looked strangely moved. At first he did not reply; then he turned to her, and said, in a sharp angry manner, very unusual with him, "You must be out of your senses. What are you talking about? Pray ring for dinner at once. Let me hear no more of this stuff about the gentleman in the yellow dressing-room. My two friends here are our only guests."

Mrs. P. began, in a low voice, asseverating that she had seen some one, who was then in the yellow dressing-room, begging Mr. P. to go up at once, and convince himself. But he checked her by so stern and strange a look that she dropped the subject, and they went to dinner.

At night, after the two guests were gone, Mrs. P. said, "My dear, why were you so savage before dinner? I really did see most distinctly that strangely dressed gentleman on the stairs. I so particularly noticed his velvet dress—a kind of plum-colour, with steel buttons, and such an odd cut."

Her husband again looked agitated and angry. "I beg you earnestly," said he, "not to revert to this subject; it is a delusion—you must see I do not like it."

Mrs. P. felt there was some mystery she could not fathom. Her husband's manner was rough and unusual, he looked pale, and was silent and dull. The subject dropped. She went into the yellow dressing-room, however, found everything untouched, and heard through her maid no one had been there.

A couple of days after, Mrs. P. drove to a rather distant part of the county, to visit some relations of Mr. P.'s. She had often been there before; but now, as she sat in the dining-room at lunch, she became at once conscious that among some family pictures hanging on the walls there was one of a gentleman in a plum-coloured velvet suit of antique cut, precisely similar to the figure she had seen on the stairs. Turning to her hostess, "Whom," said she, "does that picture represent?"

"A common ancestor," was the reply. "The picture, indeed, ought to be in your house, as your husband is the head of the family, but it got into our branch by marriage; and, perhaps, on the whole, it is better that it should be here."

"I ask you," said Mrs. P., "because two days since I saw a gentleman in our house exactly resembling it, with that odd coat, and no one saw him but me; and I cannot understand what became of him."

"Pray," whispered the cousin, "say nothing about it. I thought you must have known that there is a tradition that whenever the head of our family is to die, that figure is said to appear; but, indeed, I don't believe it (seeing Mrs. P. turn very pale), "I have no faith in such things. Thank God, we are all well. I wish I had not told you. Do not mention it, however, to Mr. P., for it is a painful subject with him, I believe."

Mrs. P., not being, as I said, imaginative, was not (as she told me) as much alarmed as might have been expected. She thought it strange, specially in connexion with her husband's irritated, angry manner. On her return home she found Mr. P. in his usual health; but that very night he was taken suddenly ill, and in a week from the time she had seen the figure on the stairs, he died.

Mrs. Brook related to me the following particulars, in presence of her daughter:

She and her family were living at Southampton, in a small house, somewhat out of the town. Her establishment consisted of a butler and two maid-servants. Whenever she spent the evening out, she took the house-key with her, and desired the butler to place on a table in the hall a candle and some matches, and to go to bed, so that her return might not disturb the rest of the family.

One evening some friends accompanied Mrs. Brook to the door, and having seen her safe inside, took leave, and left her. The moon was shining, and it was a fine night.

While Mrs. Brook was holding the matches in her hand, and in the act of lighting the candle, she saw a man come down the staircase into the hall, opposite to where she stood, still busy lighting the candle.

Thinking it was the butler who had awaited her return, she said: "Oh! how can you be so foolish as to sit up, when you know I have ordered you to go to bed, and do not wish it? Why did you do so?"

As she spoke the figure slowly moved along the hall, and began to descend the kitchen stairs.

Not receiving any answer, and the candle being now well alight, she looked up more attentively, and wondered to herself why the butler did not speak, and why he wore a cut-away coat and brass buttons; for, from the dimness of the candle and the uncertain moonlight, she noticed nothing otherwise singular in his appearance. As it was late, she went up at once to bed, leaving her door open in order to hear the butler return up-stairs to his room. She undressed and went into her daughter's room, who was awake. "I cannot conceive," said she to her, "why James should have sat up for me to-night against my express orders, and now he is staying the most unaccountable time in the kitchen. I must go and wake Jane" (the maid), "and make her go and see what he is about. It is very odd."

The maid was called and asked to go down and look after James. "James, ma'am!" said she; "he is in bed up-stairs, and I am sure he has not moved, or I should have heard him over-head and on the stairs, I am such a light sleeper." Miss Brook had heard nothing either. Mrs. Brook was aghast.

"There was a man in the house, then, for he passed close to me in the hall; I did not look at his face, for I was lighting my candle, but I took it for granted it was James. And the odd coat, too. There is a man concealed below, and we must make James get up at once."

James was found fast asleep in his bed; he had never stirred. He got up and went down-stairs, followed by Mrs. Brook and the maid. The doors were all barred and locked, the windows fastened. Every hole and corner was searched, no one was found, not a chair even had been moved. Mrs. Brook began to feel uncomfortable; the singular dress struck her, and something strange in the motion of the figure, which in the hurry of the moment she had not remembered.

At last, tired out and very much frightened, they all went to bed. Next morning a policeman was sent for, and Mrs. B. described the whole occurrence and the appearance of the figure. "Oh," replied the policeman, "that was the ghost—many have seen that ghost in this house before. He walks down those stairs from the top

of the house. Years ago his master murdered him below, at the foot of the stairs near the kitchen, and his body was found there. If you take up the matting you will see the stains of blood in the flooring, which no washing will remove." Mrs. Brook did see some dark marks on the spot indicated. She left the house almost immediately.

THE SORTIE FROM NAUMBURG.

TRANSLATED FROM UHLAND'S BALLAD, "THE HUSSITES BEFORE NAUMBURG."

THE Hussites came down on Naumburg,
Jena way and by Kamburg;
On the Vogelwies with fear,
We saw nought but sword and spear,
Near a hundred thousand.

And as they round poor Naumburg spread,
Our women cried aloud for bread.
Hunger pinched us and thirst too.
For a pinch of coffee you
Paid your sixteen pfennings.

Just as want of all bereft us,
And each hope had long since left us,
The master of a little school
Had a thought (he was no fool),
"Let's try," he said, "the children."

"Children," said he, "you are young,
Pure, and sinless, free from wrong,
You shall to the Hussite camp.
Bad they are, yet not one scamp
Will dare lift a sabre."

Grimly all the Hussites smiled,
Cherries gave to every child;
Then Procopius drew his sword.
"Face about," he spread the word;
"Right about from Naumburg."

That blessed day to celebrate,
We still hold our yearly fête,
And the cherries laughing bring
To the tents where we all sing,
"Freedom and Victoria."

SIX MONTHS IN THE EAST.

CHRISTMAS DAY.

WE did not sit round a yule log and tell each other Christmas stories, because the punkah was flapping in our faces and the thermometer stood at eighty-seven degrees. The scene has changed from the Holy Land to the Straits of Babel Mandeb, at the bottom of the Red Sea—a name and a vicinity which speak queerly of Ali Baba and the Arabian Nights. The good friends and pleasant companions who journeyed with me in Palestine have gone their several ways: Edward to cheer a dear invalid's last Christmas Day by dining with him at Nice; the sheik to visit relatives; and George to hurry back post-haste for England to consume that plum-pudding, in the bosom of his family, which we had jestingly declared to lay heavy on his soul all the time he was away. In point of fact, George spent the festival in a railway carriage on Mont Cenis, where he was snowed-up, an unsatisfactory termination to much telegraphing beforehand, and to unceasing studies of the various routes home; but he has said since that his dry biscuits, washed down with cognac and snow-water, had quite a Christmasy flavour, and that the French bagman and the Italian officer who shared his compartment, proved excellent company. All this I learn later. For myself, I have hurried away from Jaffa, leaving the Austrian Lloyd's boat, which brought me off, at Port Saïd; have come up the Suez Canal for the twentieth time as far as Ismailia, and, after spending a day and night at Cairo, have sailed from Suez for Bombay. We, a goodly company of the outward bound, are about to spend Christmas together on board one of the Peninsular and Oriental Company's steamers; are to arrive at Aden on Christmas Eve, and, after staying there the night while the ship takes in coals, are to resume our voyage early on Christmas morning. Fresh from the land and the sites which gave Christmas and its sacred associations to the world, I feel as if I had been now thrown into the midst of an extraordinary conjunction of places, people, and seasons. Arabia, Nubia, Abyssinia, Jiddah, Mocha, the Red Sea, and the Indian Ocean — these be strange names for a Londoner to hereafter associate with the festival to which he has looked forward annually in England, for as long as he can remember. It seems as if I were called upon to take part in some fantastic vision, in which all the stories I have read of Oriental travel, and of out-of-the-way Christmas gatherings, were to be combined.

By an excellent prevision, and one for which I hereby tender my thanks to the directors of the Peninsular and Oriental Company, everybody on board is to be made to feel that Christmas is a festival. It is all very well for refined philanthropists to preach about the wickedness of associating our enjoyments brutally with food, but what else can the motley crew who work our steamer have in common with us or with each other? Quashee, the half-naked Seedeeboy stoker, who lives on curry prepared by one of his brethren, and whose chief delight is to lie basking in the sun from which we shrink, his head uncovered to its fierce rays, and his shiny black carcase grilling on the heated metal work about the engine-room—Quashee rejoices in having a double quantity, or three pounds,

of rice served out to him. After consuming the whole of it, he and his numerous fellows steal and hide each other's grimy skull-caps, or give or take sly blows such as would fell a bullock, and chase round and round the iron bars forming the open space about the funnel—their favourite playground—and jabber and show their white teeth as if the P. and O. notions of Christmas reminded them of the hospitalities of their native kraal, and as if the large monkey-house in the Regent's Park had served them as a model for a gymnasium. Ching Rung and the other cleanly Chinamen, in snow-white pinafores and trousers, who man the captain's gig, look askance at the greasy Seedeeboys, and squat, models of neatness, on the forecastle deck, while they mend and darn their linen with scrupulous care, and tell stories of the small-footed beauties of Hong Kong. There are with us, too, several sets of native seamen from Bombay (each set working under its own "tindal," or ganger), whose lean legs, cased in tight cotton pantaloons, look like sticks of sealing-wax, so thin and brittle are they; an Arab pilot, who spends his life on P. and O. steamers, and who tells you quite calmly that he has a wife at Suez and another at Aden, and that he likes the Aden one best, because she of Suez is growing old; natives in smart uniform of blue and white, whose special business it is to stand "at attention" on the deck until they hear the cry of "Sepoy!" when they hasten to the passenger who calls, with a light for his cigar; and English quarter-masters, who are dressed like the model seamen of the British stage, who are rarely called upon for hard work, that being left to the native seamen aforesaid, and who look so smart and active, that you long to set them to a course of hornpipes. All these, thanks to the genial traditions of the great company, keep Christmas in their several ways, and are taught to think of it as a season for rejoicing. The saloon critics—severe men for the most part, but honourably just—comment on these things approvingly, as inspiring a higher conception of directorial human nature than is commonly entertained; and as we glide by the jagged and desolate mountains of Arabia, and approach Aden's volcanic peaks, it is agreed that the company's venial errors in the selection of sherries and clarets will be forgiven it, in consideration of the hospitable homage it renders to the time. The ship's bells toll out the half-hours shrilly, and are the chimes which herald our Christmas Eve; the gorgeous tropical sun sinks behind the opal sky in a flood of glory, "leaving," as has been beautifully said, "a rosy path, as if the Sacred tread were fresh upon the water;" then the firmament grows radiant as orb after orb glitters forth, and night is upon us, and Christmas has begun.

It is now that we drop anchor off Steamer Point, Aden, and welcome the pleasant portly figure of the Peninsular and Oriental Company's agent on board. I look out eagerly for the friend with whom I have promised to spend the evening at the military cantonments three miles off, and learn, alas! that he is smitten with fever. He and a brother officer went out shooting on the mainland of Arabia a few days before, taking with them a couple of servants. All four succumbed to sunstroke, one of the party had died, and my friend lay seriously if not dangerously ill. A sad greeting for Christmas Eve, I muttered to myself, as I made silently for my cabin—I was standing, travelling-bag in hand, at the top of the companion-ladder, and ready to descend it joyously when I heard this distressing news—but the hospitable gentleman at whose house my friend was laid up insisted upon my coming on shore to sleep. Thus it was that I spent my Christmas Eve in an Anglo-Indian bungalow—the first I had seen—with a drawing-room seventy feet wide by ninety feet long, and sleeping chambers with fixed venetian blinds instead of windows, through which the boisterous wind rattled the night long. The spacious bareness of this establishment, the strange look of hall-doors and windows left wide open through the night; the numerous dusky, white-robed figures lounging about the vast corridors and antechambers; and the unceasing clatter of the heavy sun-blinds against the balconies outside, made a combination of sights and sounds which impressed me greatly.

An affecting visit to the sick-chamber—a distant apartment, selected thoughtfully as being far from the hum of the household; some exquisite ballad-singing in the drawing-room, during which eyes fill with foolish tears, and some one I know experiences a strange nipping sensation about the heart, for it is Christmas Eve, and these same ballads had been heard from dear lips at home; some temperate conviviality; a quiet but hearty interchange of good wishes, and we retire, thankful for the agreeable change implied in sleeping on shore.

There is an early service next morning

at the little church in the arid hollow below the rock on which our friend's bungalow is perched; and we read from tablets on that church's walls of gallant fellows who have died at Aden, and whose comrades and friends have erected these memorials to their masonic and other virtues. We wonder how these dead and gone brethren spent their last Christmas Day on earth, and whether they looked forward to future anniversaries to be kept with those they loved, as ardently as we are doing now. There are some attempts at Christmas decoration in the choir and nave, and the building differs from an ordinary English church only in the addition of punkahs; while the elegantly dressed congregation, the sublime language of the familiar service, and the half-dozen carriages outside, which include a private hansom—the only one in Aden—all speak eloquently of home.

We hear bitter complaints of the horrors of "coaling" and the impossibility of sleeping through it, and receive rueful congratulations on our absence when we rejoin our friends on board the steamer, and pass the compliments of the season to one set of laggards after another as they come up on deck. Dusky native youths swim round the ship regardless of sharks, diving for the coins thrown to them, and looking like overgrown newts in some giant aquarium. The mail steamer from Calcutta came in two hours ago, and these lads swim from our ship's side to it and back again, delivering notes and Christmas messages, until our anchor is lifted and we steam out of Aden harbour, with eyes fixed wistfully on the homeward bound.

The day has begun well, despite a freshening wind and a tumbling sea, which plays havoc among the ladies. The professional diver who came with us from Suez, and who could not be left at Shadwan, whither he was bound for purposes connected with the lost Carnatic, by reason of our passing that island at night, is sent off in a boat to the steamer for Suez, and hopes audibly that the blundering ill luck which has made him miss trains, put himself on board the wrong ships, and drop his money, clothes, implements, and credentials, at intervals during his journey from England, will be exorcised by the hearty wishes for a merry Christmas which are shouted—for much diving has made him deaf—as he leaves us. The painful question connected with the friendless Levantine clerk was virtually settled by a subscription in the saloon yesterday; but the formal announcement has been reserved until this morning, when it is proclaimed on the quarter-deck as a welcome bit of Christmas news. This wretched "stowaway" was discovered somewhere in the recesses of the hold when we had been two days at sea, his only excuse being that he was starving in Egypt through the termination of the canal works; and that he had friends and the prospect of regular employment at Bombay. His case was adjudicated on by the captain, with the purser as public prosecutor, and the man who discovered the culprit as chief witness, and the stern sentence provided for such cases had been duly passed. The stowaway had acknowledged his guilt, pleading extenuating circumstances, and crying for mercy. But the court had no power. The man had come on board, knowing that he had not a stiver wherewith to pay his passage-money, and placidly resolved that the company should be at the cost of keeping him; so he was to be sent back to Suez in the first steamer leaving Aden, and to be handed over to the authorities and punished for his fraud. But happily for him Christmas intervened; and the saloon passengers, headed by a benevolent colonel, determined to pay his passage and to give him his chance in India. I am afraid we helped a scamp. But the claims of the season carried all before them, and the sleek and supple Greek—he was an educated man, who spoke four languages, had a plausible manner, and what is known in Old Bailey circles as "the embezzling face,"—profited accordingly. He became a full-blown passenger, and rather patronised such of us as questioned him afterwards. Whenever the kind-hearted colonel addressed him it seemed as if the stowaway became possessed with a gentle melancholy as one saddened by the out-of-jointedness of the world; though I often heard him leading the laughter on the forecastle deck, and the quality of his attentions to Mrs. Shekarry's pretty English maid made one long to kick him—hard. Still, we all made a point of believing in him, excepting the captain and the purser, who took a professional view, and old gentlemen asked quite tenderly if he were well cared for now, whether he had as much pudding as he could eat, and if there were anything else he wanted to make him happy on the voyage. In short, he became the most popular man in the class to which he was relegated, for that was composed of mere commonplace, honest people, who had paid

their passage, and who were under no obligation to us.

The Shekarrys were newly married. He had obtained leave from his regiment in India a few months before, and had been over to England for his bride; a vivacious, pretty little lady, who had her own clique at the saloon-table, and who would, I promise you, be an acquisition to the balls, picnics, and junketings of the Anglo-Indian station which was to be her new home. Shekarry—known as Jumping Tom in his regiment—was a model for an athlete, and, besides being a mighty hunter, was up to many a pretty trick in which hardness of muscle and suppleness of limb were requisites. He performed for us sometimes, and when night came on, and the oppressive heat of the day had yielded to the fresh southerly wind, lamps were slung to the poop bulwarks, and the ladies sat in a row, while Shekarry and other strong young men twisted themselves into strange attitudes, and writhed, and tumbled, and tied each other into double knots on the deck. But the shooting of wild animals was Shekarry's speciality. There were a couple of young guardsmen on board who were going to remain twelve months in India for the sake of the sport to be found in its jungles and forests, and it was really pitiable, according to Shekarry, to find how ignorant they were of all it was essential to know. *They* do any good! *They* bring home tiger or bear skins! *They* hunt the elephant! Well, they might of course, everything was possible; but in Shekarry's opinion they were far more likely to be swindled by the natives they hired, to be led an unprofitable dance over the country, and to return home soured, and declaring sport in India to be a delusion. "To do any good, sir," Shekarry assured me confidentially, and quite as if *I* meant to throw myself voluntarily in the way of wild beasts, "to do any real good, you must sleep in the jungle without a tent, and deny yourself a fire at night, for the smoke scares animals. Your servant must carry with you suits of clothes as nearly the colour of the shrubs and underwood you are among as possible; and your beaters must be practised hands, who know that you fully understand their business, and will punish them if they shirk it or endeavour to impose upon you. Even when you've taken care of all these things, it's not always easy to get a chance at a tiger. Game's getting scarcer and scarcer in India" (with great pathos this); "and places which I remember as a safe find for tigers, bears, and antelopes, are now not worth the cigar I'm smoking. You have to go several days' journey from them before you come upon a trace of big game, which is, alas! getting more and more difficult every year!" By "big game" Shekarry meant the savage and powerful brutes we see in menageries; and while I admired timidly, and at an immense moral distance, the prowess in the field which entitled him to speak thus airily, I wondered a little at his selection of an auditor, and that he did not see the dread with which the mere thought of such terrible wild fowl inspired me. But our Christmas dinner is waiting, and if you accompany me to the saloon you will see that it has burst into blossom in honour of the day.

Festoons of fresh green leaves decorate its bright satin-wood and mahogany walls, recalling far-away English country-houses, family parties, and Sir Roger de Coverley. The clock over the sideboard, by the captain's chair, ticks from behind a handsome framework of foliage and fruit; apples, oranges, and bananas hang from branches with which they have no botanical affinity; a "Merry Christmas," and "Speed the Good Ship," are inscribed in leafy letters of gigantic size over the cabin-doors; and glistening berries, rosy tomatoes, and gay artificial flowers, are interspersed so artfully with natural leaves as to make the floating hall a very bower of Christmas festivity. The chief steward, genial man, has done it all, but how? The combinations we could understand as being within the reach of decorative science; but we had been simmering in the Red Sea for a week; the whole of the dreary cinder called Aden did not hold shrubs or trees enough to furnish forth such a display as this, so we asked by what miracle the scorched timbers of our ship had been made to bud and bring forth Christmas fruit. The sudden change made us young again. We were no longer world-worn travellers, each carrying his or her weary burden to the hot shores of Hindostan, but joyous playfellows who belonged to that remote period in history, not the less real because it pertains to the world of Fancy, when Christmas was an omnipotent, glee-compelling potentate, whose snow and holly were unfailing harbingers of gentleness and loving-kindness among the children of men. A more wondrous feat than this timely blossoming was never performed by magician, and we asked each other blankly, but delightedly, how the

thing was done. There was fine fun, I promise you, in the theories hazarded and the guesses made. One old Anglo-Indian, who plumed himself on his experience, told the wildest "crams" in the driest way. A garden was kept up by the P. and O. Company on the main-top, in order that we outward-bound passengers might enjoy Christmas sights on Christmas Day. Our good friend, the captain, had a green-house in that snug mid-deck cabin of his, in which his faithful Bombay servant dug and delved the year round, under an oath of secrecy; there was a plantation in the hold, and a tropical garden under the engine-rooms; every steward was a florist by profession, and compelled by the terms of his engagement to grow plants in a hat-box in his berth, which hat-box was filled with rich mould by "niggers" at the company's expense: such were the stories that wicked Colonel Simkin whispered to pretty Miss Gigells, who had never been "out" before, and was now going to keep house for her rich bachelor uncle, a civilian "high up" in Madras. Speculation ran wild until the captain told the secret. He was too gallant to resist the importunities of some fair querists who implored him to enable them to decide a wager of gloves, and gave "Moses's Wells" as the place from which the verdure came. A few miles down the Gulf of Suez, and on the opposite coast to the port, is a spring in the desert, round which flourishes an oasis of trees and shrubs. The ship's steward had sent over here slyly the day before our steamer left Suez, and a boatful of thickly-covered branches, and clusters of leaves, had been brought back before the passengers from England had joined her. These were kept in ice all the way down the Red Sea, and when brought out to mingle with the fruit, as we have seen, looked as fresh as if they had been gathered the day before.

The steward's efforts in honour of Christmas were ably supported by the confectioner and the cook. The confectioner, indeed, fairly took us by storm. He surrounded us with kindly wishes, expressed in the sweetest way. Graceful devices in sugar adjured us to make merry; a prosperous voyage was invoked in elecampane; absent friends and their happiness were prayed for through the medium of sponge-cake and sugar-plums; home and its treasures formed the foundation of an imposing superstructure of mince-pie; while the compliments of the season, and wishes for a speedy return to England, were ingeniously conveyed through the medium of transparent jellies and shapes of gorgeously-coloured cream. There never was such a symbolical repast. The dinner-table was one huge incentive to keep Christmas jovially; and what with Egyptian turkeys, both roast and boiled, Abyssinian geese and chickens, English mutton, and Scotch beef, the fare was as appropriate to the day as if it had been served in Belgravia or Yorkshire, and this long before the introduction of the cook's masterpiece, the massive puddings, round and hard as cannon-balls, and wreathed in spirituous flames of blue. The talk grew brisk, and there was something touching in the resolute avoidance of all subjects calculated to damp the common joy; for though we all knew we were "making believe" very much, it was a point of honour with us to each keep our skeleton in his or her own closet, and to smile and chat as if the past had left no sorrowful traditions, and the future were one of assured joy. Yet I venture to say there was a handsome cargo of anxiety on board. Remember that we were outward bound. Many of us were leaving children at ages when, above all others, they need a parent's care; some were returning to duty, after sick leave, and were doubtful whether the stock of health they had accumulated would not be speedily shattered by the climate which had already laid them prostrate; the deep mourning of some showed them to have been recently bereaved; and others, like little Mrs. Shekarry, were spending Christmas from home for the first time, and felt that however delightful the new life might prove, a complete severance from the old happy associations was not to be thought of without a pang. There were with us, too, one or two men who looked back upon a vista of frustrated hopes, and who were about to begin the world anew; as well as dried-up humorists, who took the buffets of fortune in a comic spirit, and told endless stories of the regimental and official injustice they had suffered from.

"I hate Europe, sir," said one of these, as if he were speaking of some petty village; "a beastly place. Never want to see it again. Not fit for a gentleman to live in, and they dock you of your allowances, too, directly you land there; and besides that, nobody knows you! Why have I gone to the expense and trouble of spending my leave at home if I dislike it so? I'll tell you. To be fitted with a new set of teeth! Couldn't get suited in India.

Paid away, from first to last, I don't know how many hundred rupees, and felt as if my mouth were a dice-box, the teeth I'd bought were so loose, and rattled so. That's the business which took me to England, or else I'd never have gone until my regiment was ordered home—never! Yes, I'm capitally suited now, and have as good a set of artificial grinders down in my cabin as any man on board. Why don't I wear 'em? Not here, sir" (with immense expression), "thank you! The meals are served too briskly for that, and I should be nowhere in the race. You can't eat quickly with new teeth, and the young fellows would have me at a disadvantage; so I shall just keep them locked up till I join my station up country, and can practise privately!"

Other figures troop up as I recal this, to me, strange Christmas Day. That ship's officer, with whom I quaffed moselle, grizzled a little, and on the border-land between young manhood and middle age; does he suppose I did not read his secret? Pooh, pooh! men don't hang up those pretty specimens of accomplished female handiwork in their cabins, and relieve the tedium of uninteresting talk by gazing sentimentally at home-made works of art, unless there's something in it. I furnished the uninteresting talk, so I ought to know. "Tremble not, sister, I too have erred!" said the Scotch baillie to a weeping penitent; and the pleasantest of companions confided his honest love to me, without knowing it, before our friendship was many hours old. That other officer, whose aquiline features were swarthy as a Spaniard's, and whose gleaming teeth and bright hazel eyes always played in unison when a joke was in the wind, how thorough was his good-natured wonder at the flightiness of the landsman who stood by him on deck, wrapped in amazement and awe at the glories of an Indian sunrise! The old trader who had announced publicly, on approaching Alexandria, that he should "have a scrub" on shore, and of whom it was currently reported he thought it unnecessary to wash at sea; the married couple who were overheard indulging in ferocious quarrelling, and the baser half of which had been remonstrated with by the Indian officer who occupied the next cabin; the poor lady who gave way and became abjectly lackadaisical in sea-sickness, and who, mistaking the yachting jacket with gilt buttons worn by a waggish passenger for the doctor's uniform, asked for a fresh prescription for the hundredth time, and swallowed obediently three quart bottles of stout before breakfast, to have her flushed face pointed out by the cruel practical joker as a physiological curiosity for the following twenty-four hours; the curiously exclusive pair, of which the gentleman was querulous and an apparent invalid, and the lady buxom, blooming, and strong; the pair who were ridiculous in the ship's eyes by reason of their playing the game of turtle-dove in public, and of its being known that they had each petitioned privately that they might be relegated to different cabins; the two gentle, soft-voiced ladies who were going to their husbands at far-away stations, and who were divided between grief for the children they had left and joy at the prospect of re-joining their lords; the highly objectionable young man who would obtrude his conversation where it was wanted least, and who boasted to a hostile damsel in perfect good faith, "If you knew my father's position, and how rich he is, you'd be glad to talk to me;" the military officer who was gallantry incarnate, and a philanderer from his youth up, who always looked the swell of the period let him dress how he would; the brave, kindly gentleman with the frank eyes, who was returning with his wife to complete his term of service before claiming his pension, and who, when on duty, exercised a beneficent sway over a district as large as Ireland; the insignificant little man who rose suddenly into celebrity by singing sentimental ballads with unexpected sweetness; the lank and haughty civilian with the "Dowb" name, who had distinct theories as to his own importance, but who was without any other definite ideas; the pale and wizened old-young married lady who wore her mature hair in well-oiled ringlets, monopolised the piano, warbled infantile sentiment, and made and exhibited sketches on the faintest provocation, wherein the "water" was stronger than the "colours;" the young nobleman bound for Calcutta as aide-de-camp to Lord Serang, whose features and expression were in themselves a patent of nobility, and who was a modest and inoffensive lad enough, in spite of the terrific toadying he endured—the toady-in-chief known among us pleasantly as the "Flunky," a brawny person with staring eyes and a strident voice; the fat, inert, and sallow military doctor, who looked the incarnation of liver-complaint, and whose favourite occupation was sprawling on his back on his private couch of wickerwork; the bright young Bombay merchant with the delicate wife,

who supplied all comers with amusing books and choice cheroots; the rank and file of passengers, men and women in whom it was difficult to discern the qualifications for inspiring interest, but who were as precious to their own circles, believe me, as your worship is to yours; the moody dreamer who, when we were playing a Christmas game, in which questions and answers had to be put and given, in quotations from well-known English authors, startled us all by replying to a merry query in a gloomy voice, and apparently with personal application: "I am he, neglected in my youth, and miserably poor, who strove and suffered, and still strove and suffered, until I hewed out knowledge from the mine where it was buried, and made rugged steps thereof for my worn feet to rest and rise on" — such were some of the party which sat under the punkah that Christmas eventide. Of the actual palpable lovers who were with us in the flesh I say nothing. We knew them. Not a squeeze of the hand under the shawl it was pretending to arrange; not a sympathetic interchange of glances; not a timid, furtive, conscious look at the bystanders, but was noted instinctively. So, when the quarter-deck was lit up, and the violin and other instruments were ranged in file—the P. and O. Company used to support a band on each large ship, but this has been put down in the interests of the shareholders, and we had to be satisfied with impromptu music—there were certain couples who were not expected to dance apart, and who fulfilled the popular anticipations to a nicety. The captain (a bachelor) danced twice and sang once, winning all hearts, but thinking secretly, as wayward fancy whispered, of some Christmas of the future in which a bright English home, with closed curtains and a blazing hearth, to say nothing of one gentle loving face, stood out so vividly as to exclude the noisy quarter-deck, and convert the surrounding Arabian sea into a familiar village green. As for the younger ship's officers, and the officers belonging to other ships who were with us as passengers, their uniform buttons glittered through the dark night like clouds of fire-flies, so ubiquitous were they in their agile gallantry. The colonels, the captains, the collectors, the commissioners, the magistrates, the merchants, the lawyers, the speculators, the lord, and the competition wallahs, were almost as enthusiastic. The latter, who studied cabalistic black letter volumes all day, and who were currently reported to be perfecting their knowledge of Hindostanee slang, looked more delicate, and less like "lasting" than many of the bluff people who had been "out" half a lifetime, and were naturally less demonstrative than the rest of us, because they were more hampered with dignity. But even they unbent for all that, and long before the mysterious whisper went round that some of the largest soup tureens ever constructed were to be seen in the saloon as curiosities, and that the inquisitive in such matters declared them to be filled strangely with a compound of lemon, spirits, sugar, and hot water, and ready for all comers, the success of our Christmas party was assured. There had been talk some days before of amateur theatricals and charades, but the project fell through for want of a leader with knowledge of the stage, and we agreed complacently that it was better as it was. We had tried story-telling, too, but after exhuming a couple of "Old Joes," who had been long and deservedly mess-room favourites, this form of amusement was given up. There had been, in short, little organisation, and no programme, but as that stalwart ornament to the Dubbabad Irregulars, the gallant Pugree, remarked breathlessly, mopping his heated forehead meanwhile with his handkerchief, when hearts are in the right place it is not difficult to make impromptu amusements go well.

The strongest and most devoted merry-makers, however, tire in time, so the quarter-deck gradually thins, and a comparative silence falls upon the ship. Then, as the solemn orbs shine out more brightly, as if to mutely remind us of the Star of Bethlehem; as the sea rises, and the welcome wind whistles its lullaby through the cordage, and the timbers creak and wail, so does our Christmas fade away, to take its place side by side with those ghosts of past anniversaries which each man treasures in his heart. Among the few who linger on deck are two figures in deep mourning, who are leaving the bones of their only son in an English churchyard; and their attitude makes one speculate as to the reflections of the rest of us around.

The Silent Land and the well-loved figures which wait for, or will meet us there; a shaded chamber, and a face sweet, yet awful in its changeless serenity and beauty; the little baby who was laid in the stable of an inn, and the unfailing Love and Mercy given to the world; a future in which men shall recover their dead youth, dead hopes, and dead innocence, and become as little children—such things as these were

perhaps spoken of by the voices of the night, and stilled all other talk. I know that when the latter was resumed after a long interval of quiet musing, it was in a cheerful, albeit chastened spirit, not unsuited to the season. What seemed utterly impossible was that any one of us should hint aloud of the uncertainties of life, of the perils of climate, of trials hidden in the future, or suggest that it was not a delightful situation, and one to be greatly coveted by the non-travelling world, to have panted for air at sea and in the tropics on Christmas Day.

WINTER SHOOTING IN PRUSSIA.

I HAD hardly been residing a month in Coblentz before Herr D., a gentleman of the town whose acquaintance I had made, called on me (knowing my fondness for field sports), to inform me that the members of the St. Hubert's Society in that town were going to open the season on the ensuing Wednesday, the 4th of November, and to beg me to do them the honour of accompanying them. Herr D. was enthusiastic about the game that would, no doubt, be found in the forest—enormous wild boars, he protested, splendid red deer, agile roes, crafty foxes, swift hares, dodging rabbits, and, if snow only fell at the right time, probably a stray wolf or two. He was to call for me in his carriage at seven A.M. on the morning fixed, and drive me out to an old robber castle, the place of rendezvous; finally, with many injunctions to be punctual, he took his leave.

Now I ought to premise that in Germany the right of shooting belongs, not to the owner or occupier of the land, but to the town or village to which the district appertains, and to the parish authorities. The St. Hubert Society of Coblentz had only been in existence for two years. The shooting had previously been in the hands of a club composed principally of officers who, when their lease had nearly expired, finding that there was but a small chance of its being renewed, shot down everything they could find. By this means they had so reduced the stock of deer that in the new lease, which was for nine years, a clause had been inserted to the effect that for every doe killed during the first five years, the society should pay a fine of ten thalers (about thirty shillings of our money), and as the average cost of a deer in the market is only about seven thalers, the fine was intended, of course, to protect the does, and prevent the extermination of the breed. Herr D.'s talk roused my imagination; but as in my frequent rambles through the forest I had seen but few traces of game, I resolved not to overburden myself with many cartridges, but only to carry ten for hare, ten for deer, and three (loaded with ball) for wild boar, which, indeed, proved to be quite enough.

The morning came, clear and bright. I was delighted to see the daylight, as my night had been rather a restless one (something after the fashion of one on the eve of a memorable 31st of August, some years ago, when I had just taken out my first certificate). I was roused from a delightful dream, in which I had killed a buck (royal), and a wild boar, right and left, to find the servant knocking at my door, and my watch pointing to six o'clock. Up I tumbled, lost no time, and was soon ready for breakfast, which was ordered for half-past six. Captain S., of the Eighty-first Hussars, having chanced to be passing through Coblentz, I had obtained an invitation for him, and persuaded him the night before to stop and accept it, and promise to come and breakfast with me. He was punctual, as most military men are, but complained bitterly of being obliged to get up so early. A good breakfast, however, soon put the gallant officer in better cue, and, having stored a good supply of provisions in our pockets for luncheon, we lit our cigars, and stood at the window to look out for the expected carriage, which, from the repeated injunctions I had received on the subject of punctuality, I expected every moment. Presently the clock struck seven, and hearing the sound of wheels in the street, we seized our hats and guns preparatory to rushing out, not to keep Herr D. waiting. The noise increased, and presently, to our intense disgust, lo! and behold an early milk-cart, drawn by three large dogs, with the urchin in charge perched on the top of the big tin cans, dashed past the window. After that, we waited very patiently for a long time, enlivening the moments with talk of various countries and their sports, for Captain S., although rather inclined to be languid, is yet as ardent a Nimrod as may be found in a long day's march, and had many a story to tell of his sport in India, tiger-shooting, pig-sticking, &c. He was especially indignant at the idea of shooting a boar.

"Bay Jove, old boy," he said, "if a fellah was to do such a thing as to shoot a pig in any part of India where it's possible to ride 'em, he'd be cut by the whole station; yes, bay Jove!"

But all things must have an end, and so had our waits, but not before we were well into cigar number two. Just as the clock was on the point of striking eight, up drove Herr D.'s break, containing himself and a party of six other (sportsmen I cannot call them, so I will give them their German title) jägers. Their get-up was inimitable. Let me try to describe that of Herr D., the gentleman seated opposite me in the break. He was a huge puffy man, about six feet and a half high, and nearly as much in circumference, with rings not only on his enormous fingers, but also on his podgy thumbs. To begin at the top. He proudly wore a theatrical, green Tyrolese hat, garnished with a large cockade of ribbon, the said cockade being ornamented with a plume of woodcock's or some other bird's feathers; the plume was supplemented with a tuft of deer's fur, implying that the wearer had been fortunate enough to kill one of those animals; under this green tower appeared about half of a fat, jolly, red, clean-shaved face, the rest being hidden by the united aid of the hat-brim and a huge woollen comforter, which, wound several times round the throat, so encroached upon the red face, as only to allow, as if by a favour, room for a big German pipe to obtain access to the mouth. The coat seemed to be some sort of uniform, dark grey with green facings. Every one of the party, also, wore an overcoat of dark green or blue, to assimilate with the colour of the woods, dark trousers, with either long boots reaching high above the knee, or, as in the case of my fat friend, woollen gaiters buttoning up to the thigh. But this was merely the foundation for the proud superstructure of game-bag, gun-sling, cartridge-pouch, various straps, and, shade of Nimrod! a muff—yes, actually a muff!—not one made like those English girls use to keep their dear little white hands warm, but a huge, misshapen affair, constructed of fox or hare skin, with pockets in it for brandy-flask, &c., and slung round the neck by a "braw" green cord, with large tassels.

The game-bags, also, were wonderful works of art, consisting of huge leather receptacles for foxes, into which poor Reynard was to be poked head first, with his brush hanging out in front, then other partitions, I suppose for hares, and outside these large fringed nets, containing various parcels, among which tobacco, and sausages of various hues, from white through many shades of brown to black, were everywhere predominant; outside these came broad flaps to keep off the wet, while the upper edges were supplied with rows of loops, intended probably by the sanguine jägers to be strung with birds; under the flaps, and over the nets, were rows of tubes for cartridges, or, as I noticed in the case of one man, for short sections of cane with a partition in the middle like the old-fashioned charger, having powder at one end and shot at the other; one gentleman, who was armed with an old-fashioned brass-mounted gun, wore a powder-case of cow's horn slung by a green cord. Very careful were these brave jägers of their personal comfort, for each man had a walking-stick which, by a clever adaptation of the carpenter's art, became a seat at the owner's pleasure. Their guns were all doubles, many of them breechloaders, and, in Herr D.'s case, having one barrel smooth and the other rifled. Of course we English were deeply impressed by all these preparations, and also by the loud talk of the number of head these worshippers of St. Hubert expected to kill that season, interspersed with anecdotes of what they had done and not done since last year.

When we reached the rendezvous, we found a party of twenty-two guns assembled, and, being fresh hands, we were much patronised; in fact, Captain S. thought rather offensively patronised, for he was actually told how to carry his gun, an indignity that he felt deeply, ejaculating, "Confound their impudence! Bay Jove, I've carried a gun a thousand times to their once, and now they tell me how to manage it, bay Jove!" I, too, came in for advice in another direction, for one aged individual expostulated with me for having my cartridges loose in my pocket, but I shut him up most completely by informing him that I had carried them so for the last twenty years without having met with an accident, and at the same time I pointed out to him that his own gun, loaded and cocked, had both barrels looking most inquisitively at my ribs, and that if it was to go off nothing but a miracle could prevent my being the recipient of its contents. Upon this he retired, and I saw him no more, except once, when he missed a hare with both barrels, and I offered, much to his disgust, to go into the wood to bring the dead animal out for him.

There were also at the rendezvous about a dozen beaters, with as many dogs, of all kinds, from the German Dachs, which might be sold by the yard, they are so long in the back, yet so short in the legs, to a good-looking but evil-doing pointer, reputed to be English, and for which his owner told me

he had lately given eighty thalers (twelve pounds). Of course I praised the beast's looks, which pleased his owner very much, but, at the same time, I could not help thinking that the brute would have been dear at eight thalers if one were obliged to keep him.

We made but a short stay at the rendezvous, but soon started off for the forest; at its very entrance the old gentleman who acted as the captain turned his face to a rock and called out a number as we filed passed him. This, I thought, was a very fair way of allotting us our various places, as he did not know who was passing, and did not call the numbers consecutively; this ceremony being repeated at each division of the forest, all of us had the same chance of the best places.

My station in the first beat was, as they all told me, the best in the place for roe-deer, so I prepared accordingly. It was a lovely spot; the paths winding round the face of the hill, with a well-wooded bank in front of me; behind rose almost a precipice with a noisy little stream at its foot; on the other side spread a small meadow, surrounded by high and thickly-wooded hills, while in the distance, beyond the course of the stream, I could see the Rhine, that, swollen by the recent rains, rolled foaming and eddying along, under a bright November sun. The head and shoulders of a green-hatted burly jäger, who stood preparing for doughty deeds against the savage denizens of the forest, made a fine foreground. There was a short pause, occupied by our captain in placing his men, and by my neighbour in filling and lighting an enormous pipe; then came a shrill whistle, which was answered from a distance by the most diabolical row I ever heard. The beaters had commenced their advance, and as each of them carried a large clapper, the noise they made, mingled with the shouts of the men, and the yells of an unfortunate dog, who was being "warmed" by a good thrashing, was enough to startle any ordinarily constituted mind. But, in spite of all the noise, nothing came near me; my neighbour, however, was more fortunate; he was an old retired major, who prided himself on his knowledge of the French and English languages, and lost no opportunity of showing them off. He thus described what had happened to him:

"I was to load my pipe, and have my gun not ready, when crash, pouf! a great roe shump into the road, pouf! and he shump out again. Shusht so, pouf, pouf! and he gone."

"But why did you not shoot after him, Herr Major?" was my not unnatural question.

"Ai, ai. He go too quick, mein lieber freund; he go like de Blitz! Ja so!"

Just at this moment up came the captain, much excited. The beaters had seen a very fine roe, which they declared to be the finest ever known in the forest. "Had the Herr Englander seen it?" No, he had not, but the Herr Major had, and he at once proceeded to tell his story over again, with such variations as his fancy dictated, as he pointed to the tracks in the road as proof of his story. The captain, however, in a rather surly tone, said that he would much rather have seen the dead deer than his tracks, and, cursing the major and his pipe, led the way to another beat, where we were to find lots of wild boar, or ought to, as, according to the major, there were more wild boars than hares in the forest. Finding that the major was inclined to be communicative, I presently entered into conversation with him, and he told me the following anecdote of a wild boar.

"I was living some years ago in the south of France. A wild boar, having done great damage to the crops, a large hunting-party was got up to kill him, and I was invited to form one of the company. The woodmen, or charcoal burners, or somebody, had left a great gap open in the wall that divided two hunting-grounds, and it was through this gap that the boar used to come. Near this spot I, as the guest, was placed, it being expected that the boar would make for it directly he was roused, and in order to make it safe, it had been blocked up with some new, inch-thick, strong elm plank. As I listened to the noise of the beaters the boar made his appearance, going at a good pace for the gap. I did not fire, as I expected that when he saw the obstacle he would halt, and give me a fair shot. But to my surprise, instead of moderating his pace, potztausend! he increased it, and dashed right through the planks like a cannon-ball, smashing two of them, and going off into the woods on the other side as if there were nothing unusual the matter, but that he had been accustomed to smash planks from his youth."

I thanked the slow-firing major for his story, and asked him if the German boars were savage, but he told me that, unless wounded, they would run away, and that they were so swift that they were seldom brought to bay by the hounds.

The next beat was blank, and the one

after that, but in the fourth, as I was standing motionless at my post on the side of a hill in a fine open forest, I saw a hare come hopping very unconcernedly along at about ten yards' distance from me; but as there were two jägers in full view below me, and the hare was going straight towards them, I thought I would not shoot, but would see what they would do, and so let her pass. Number one, as soon as he saw her, sprang up from his walking-stick seat; on this number two, also seeing the hare, gave a yell, dropped his pipe, and blazed away both his barrels at the hare, which so frightened, or rather astonished her, that she actually sat up and looked at him. Such an opportunity was not to be lost, so number two blazed away both barrels in his turn, the first of which made her squat, and, after the second, she quietly jumped up and went off at that peculiar trotting pace hares sometimes assume. Both then rushed to the spot, each swearing that he had hit her, but finding no marks of fur or blood, they began mutual recriminations, number one abusing number two for the yell, which, he said, caused the hare to stop, and made him miss her, as he, thinking she was still moving, had fired where she ought to have been, while number two abused number one for jumping about and distracting his attention while he was in the act of shooting. In short, words ran so high that at last number two, who was a woodman, strode home, and was seen no more that day.

Soon after this my fat friend the major arrived in a great state of heat, mentally and bodily.

"Never were such a set of stupid fellows; never was such bad luck. He had been told to go ever forwards, but there was no one near him, and he saw eleven roes cross the very spot he wanted to stop at, yet no one was there. Never was such a set of stupid fellows!" &c.

Words rose high, then all joined in abusing the unfortunate woodman, who, fortunately for himself, had decamped, or perhaps he might have come off but badly amongst them all. Our last beat recompensed us, however, for all our previous bad fortune, a fine roebuck and an enormous hare being the victims. The roe, however, was hit in a most unfortunate place, for the jäger, not being able to see the head, had fired at the tail, and distributed a double charge of buck shot, with the utmost impartiality, on each side of that ornament, bringing down the buck, but spoiling the haunches. This consideration, however, did not detract from the exultation with which he placed a tuft of the fur in his hat, nor from the evident pride with which he looked on us as we crowded round the fallen animal, and alternately praised the jäger's skill and envied his luck. No other game helped to swell our bag, except a kind of grouse, which some one shot in a tree. So, as night was coming on, we now all repaired to a small inn on the borders of the forest, and sat down to some excellent coffee and bread-and-butter. The game was sold by auction, the deer fetching seven thalers, and the hare one thaler, which money went to the funds of the society. On counting my cartridges when I reached home, I found I had brought back the whole twenty-three, but if I did not fire a shot, I still had had a most enjoyable day, and cannot speak in too high terms of the kindness of the members of the St. Hubert's Society, who had treated me as one of themselves, and given me as good a chance of seeing and shooting the game as they had had themselves.

My next day's shooting was in severer weather, and was crowned with a nobler result.

I had been out in the morning to Oberwerth, for the purpose of determining the degree of cold, on which subject I had had a conversation the evening before with Herr Wehmar, the engineer to the Rhine Navigation Company, who told me that he had been sent to make some observations below Coblentz on the road to Andemath, and had been driven home by the cold, so I took my thermometer and determined to find out for myself the degree of Fahrenheit. I went on to the ice, for the branch of the Rhine between Oberwerth and the left bank of the river was frozen so hard that, at the sides, the ice rested upon the bed of the stream, and the English chaplain, who lived on the island, was having a lot of coal brought over from the main land in waggons; Herman, the civil old ferryman, looked like a frozen-out Charon, his occupation being gone, his punt fixed hard and fast into four feet of ice, and himself reduced to acting as a tout to an enterprising individual who had started an establishment on the ice to let skates and chairs, and provide hot coffee. I had a chat with him while my thermometer was making up its mind as to the degree of cold, which it at last did, by marking twenty degrees, when I found it would not go any lower; I started off for the town, and walked along, wondering whether I should ever have the luck to shoot anything in Prussia. I was roused out of my

brown study by meeting Herr Stahlehr, the captain of the hunt, accompanied by his inevitable dog, Waldman, which animal, by-the-bye, was also known by the name of Master Stahlehr, as the old bachelor loved it like a child, and literally gave it a share of his bed and his board. His face — Herr Stahlehr's I mean, not Master Stahlehr's—reminded me forcibly of a half-peeled walnut, the dark green hood answering to the rind, while his face was as brown and wrinkled as any walnut that ever was grown in Prussia. I could see at once, both by the sparkle of his eye and the way in which he was puffing out the smoke of his huge pipe in short quick jerks, that there was something up, and he soon told me what it was, for his first words after the usual "Morgen, Morgen," were, "I have been sending everywhere for you, Herr Englander. There are two boars marked down on the Ganz-Kopf; make haste and come on with Herr H., he has promised to call for you as he passed. We rendezvous at the Foresters at two."

Herr H. came in due time, and, hurrying up the street, we overtook and joined company with the main body of jägers at the gate. Great was the change that had taken place since I last passed that road, less than an hour before. Then I was moody and cross, the shouts and laugh of the people flitting about on the ice, on their ringing skates, seemed to mock me, and, as the Americans say, "I felt bad;" but now all was changed; the same sun shone, the same ice glittered, the same lads and lasses glided about, or formed in groups on the ice; but their laughter now awoke an echo in my heart, and I shouted out the burden of the old German hunting-song, Wass treibt den Waldman nach den Wald, with lusty lungs and a happy heart, and the ice-rangers stilled their merriment for a moment to listen to the loud chorus, swelled by the voices of twenty jolly jägers.

We soon reached the turn into the hills, and I was astonished at the intense force of the frost. A spring that in summer had purled and babbled by the side of the upward footpath, being frozen out of its wonted channel, had flowed over the track, and formed a perfect sheet of ice at a very acute angle, we were therefore obliged to sling our guns and haul ourselves up hand over hand by the help of the small bushes which grew out of the crevices of the rocks at the side, for owing to the path being at the bottom of a deep gorge there was no climbing out. Most of the party had passed in safety, when it came to my turn. I got on very well till I was nearly at the top, when my feet suddenly slipped from under me, and the bush to which I was clinging giving way, I slid rapidly down the hill, amid the uproarious laughter of the whole party, until I was stopped by an under-forester at the foot of the glacier, about thirty feet down. "Never mind," I shouted, as I scrambled up, and rubbed my knees and head, for I had received a tidy blow on the latter from my own gun, "never mind; we say in England that it is lucky to tumble up hill. Mark me, I shall kill a boar to-day." The laughter broke out fresh at this, but all took a schnaps to the fulfilment of my prophecy, and I, making a second and more cautious attempt, at last succeeded in surmounting the glacier.

As we drew near the forester's house, our voices, which had been raised in many hunting and other songs, were hushed, as the wild boar has very quick ears, and we were now not more than a mile from the Ganz-Kopf.

We had not long to wait at the house, for soon after our entrance the captain, punctual as usual, looked at his watch, and, after showing it to the party to prove that time was up, gave the word "Vorwärts!" and led the way in solemn silence.

Our places were portioned as usual, and I did not at all like the look of mine. I was posted on the extreme right of the line, under a large oak-tree. In front of me was a small open space, beyond which rose the hill covered with thick brushwood; behind me was a deep ravine, at the bottom of which a noisy little brook was wont to flow, which now, however, was transformed into a thick sheet of ice, strong enough to bear a waggon. This ravine was too wide for me to jump, and too precipitous for me to hurry down without tumbling; and as a steep hill rose beyond it, and the oak-tree was too large for me to climb, I had a very poor chance of escape should the boars take it into their heads to act on the offensive; but I had not much time to think over probabilities, for I had no sooner taken in the capabilities of the locality for attack and retreat, than I heard Herr Stahlehr's horn give the signal for the advance, and then arose the horrible row incidental to all German shooting parties. It had not begun long, and the chain of beaters could not have advanced more than one hundred yards, when there was a fearful yell from one of the component links of "Schwein! Schwein!" and the uproar was doubled. The poor pig tried to break the

left of our line, but was there confronted by Herr Tinkler, who had already this season shot at (and missed) thirteen boars; Herr T. saluted him with a double shot, which had only the effect of causing him to change his direction, and hurry along the line rather faster than he had before tried to break it. I soon heard him crashing through the bushes like a charge of cavalry, and to my delight he made his appearance in the little clearing in front of me, coming straight to my tree as if to pass it and take refuge in the ravine; but when he saw me he changed his mind, and with a savage grunt turned his head again to the right. But as he turned, being then about five yards from me, I made him a present of two ounce bullets of lead, and knew by his squeak and the unsteady gait with which he went off, that he had received one at least. Soon after I saw my friend leaning against a tree half way up the hill beyond the ravine, and knowing that he was hard hit, I dashed off after him; but the brute seemed to have as many lives as a cat, for I tracked him nearly two miles, and instead of growing faint with the loss of blood, it seemed to do him good. His footprints still showed that he was going at a great pace, so that when I met a forester, who told me that my boar was picked up and carried into Waldish, I was glad to hear it, and at once left the trail and followed him to the village, where I found a boar indeed, but not mine. Another of the party had also been successful and had killed his pig. I began to grumble and accuse the forester of deceiving me, declaring that had he not called me off the trail I should have found my boar dead; but he soon quieted me by saying "Er kommt gleich," so I was comforted and went with the rest of the party into a roadside inn for our accustomed coffee and bread-and-butter. While we were there a jäger, who had himself missed boar number two, and was rather jealous of me, took it into his head to doubt the fact of my boar being hit at all, or if it were, that I had done it. But I had many a champion, and Herr Stahlehr himself actually took the pipe out of his mouth to ejaculate "Ach Gott in Himmel, if the boar passed so close to the Herr Englander, he is but a dead pig, for the Herr can shoot straight," and my foe was completely extinguished by the sound of a noisy procession up the road, and the entrance of the head-forester with the news. "The other boar, Herr Stahlehr." So we turned out into the cold to see it; and there lay my boar on the snow, with the mark of two balls, one close behind the shoulder, and the other further back, and from the size of the holes it was decided that no other gun than mine could have made them; yet such was his tenacity of life, that though both balls had gone through him, he had run nearly four miles before he fell dead. I had my tape with me, and at once measured him. He was six feet one inch from the tip of his snout to the end of the tuft that decorated his tail; three feet four and a half inches from the tip of his toe to the top of his shoulder; four feet seven inches round the chest, and his tusks stood three inches out of his jaw. I heard afterwards that he weighed two hundred and twenty-three pounds. We had to wait a short time till a hand-truck was procured to carry the game back to Coblentz, and while waiting we fortified ourselves for our nine-mile walk home with a huge pot of warm wine mixed with sugar and spice, for which I and the other successful Nimrod had the pleasure of paying. At last the truck, or rather sledge, arrived, and the boars being placed on it, and half a dozen villagers having harnessed themselves to it, we started homeward.

This was the last day I had with the St. Hubert Verein; for a sportsman and a lover of nature, nothing can be more enjoyable than a winter's shooting in the German forests. The Germans are kind, friendly, and quick to show little kindnesses, and though sometimes they have a rough outside and a cold manner, they have large hearts, and will never give you good words instead of good deeds.

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THE DOCTOR'S MIXTURE.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER XXIV. MR. MACFARLANE OVERTHROWN.

It was when the Doctor was going home one night, furious at the rebuffs he met with from the imperturbable Macfarlane, that he said very often he would be "a match for him," and would find his weakest and most contemptible corner yet.

The next day, when he was going up "to see his dear child," he took something in his pocket for one of those he called his parishioners. At lunch that day he extolled in the most extravagant terms the merits of his D.D., its softness, oiliness, sweetness, and fragrance; it might be given to infants as "mother's milk." A spoonful of it down the windpipe would call back the departing spirits. He often brought it to his parishioners, and physic was really nothing to D.D.

"And why should you call a good spirit of the kind D.D.?" asked Mr. Macfarlane. "These are queer letters."

"They stand," said the Doctor, with great gravity, "for the 'Doctor's Delight.'"

"Whatever the delight," said the other, dryly, "it cannot rival the Scotch Glenlivat. I have tasted nothing like it since I left Scotland. There you have the true mellowness and strength combined; and in my ain country it was considered unrivalled—some of the older kinds particularly."

This not rhapsodical praise was eloquence for Mr. Macfarlane, and our Doctor looked at him with curiosity. "I happen to have some that I am taking to a parishioner, and we might divert it from its original purpose, and have it in here to taste, eh?"

"I should not care for it," said the other, dryly. "I never drink anything but Glenlivat."

The Doctor said no more. Later, as he was leaving the patient's room, he passed through a little ante-room, and took a small bottle out of his pocket, and showed to his friend, dilating on its merits—praise which was coldly received. After a short delay the Doctor went away. When he got home, he discovered, or said he discovered, that he had forgotten the precious flask.

When he came the next day it was where he had left it. The ante-room was only to be reached through Mr. Leader's bedroom. As soon as the Doctor saw an opportunity he "slipped in," held the bottle to the light, smelt, tasted, and laid it down again, with an exclamation of impatience. He "forgot" it again that day, only he placed it in a less conspicuous position. On the next day he looked again, and saw with delight that the level of the liquor had descended from the cork about an inch. There was always a little copper kettle kept on the fire, or hob, for the sake of the invalid, a fact which the Doctor noticed, and had, perhaps, suggested.

The Doctor noticed some fresh matters; and, among other things, a change in the manner of Mr. Leader to him. There was a sort of timorous shrinking away and restraint, especially as Doctor Findlater grew affectionate and soothing. Consulting with his Katey, the Doctor found that she, too, had observed nearly the same symptoms. "Oh, Peter, I am afraid he is taking a dislike to me, perhaps from seeing so much of me!" Mrs. Leader and her brother also had an air of insolent triumph in their eyes, which they hardly cared to conceal.

That night, Mr. Macfarlane had undertaken to keep watch, and established himself carefully by the fire in the ante-room. Mr. Leader had been "low" all the day, and was now restless. Mr. Macfarlane had the evening papers, a little cold fowl laid ready, and was apparently going to make a snug cosey night of it, though he was considered in the house a sort of ascetic. Katey had gone to rest, not a little disturbed about her father and some contemptuous hints which Mrs. Leader had dropped. The wretched and perhaps unholy sacrifice which she had made of herself, came back on her, as she thought of the miserable intrigue going on about her, the chilling bondage into which she had sold herself. She could not sleep; and, as the hours wore on, the gathering gloom of future prospects seemed to weigh yet more on her.

Her room was directly under Mr. Leader's, and, as she pursued her dismal meditations, suddenly she heard a crash over head and the sound of trampling feet. In great alarm she jumped up. Mary Leader's room was next to hers; and as she went out she met her friend, who had just risen, alarmed by the same sound.

Both hurried up, for both were courageous women. Mr. Leader was still asleep, tossing in some uneasy dream; but in the ante-room, stretched on the floor, his feet in the fender, his arms extended, an overturned chair beside him, was the figure of Mr. Macfarlane, vainly striving to rise.

The air reeked with the fragrance of hot mixed spirits, and on the table was the bottle of the Doctor's D.D., quite empty!

Thus had his plan succeeded, and thus was Fin once more, as he would say himself, "at the head of the poll!"

The unfortunate gentleman was drawn away out of danger by the two girls. They need not do more, as he was now in a deep slumber: D.D. resting heavy on his chest. It was close on morning, so they had not long to sit up. By that time Mr. Macfarlane began to recover, and staggered away to his bed. But Katey, with early dawn, despatched a letter to her father, begging of him to come: for Mr. Leader was indeed complaining, and wanted aid.

At eight o'clock Doctor Findlater had arrived, glossy and "fresh as a four-year-old." When he was told what had happened, he showed no surprise, but a smile played about his mouth.

"What a pity you forgot that flask, Peter dear!" Katey said simply.

"A pity for the flask!" said the Doctor, taking it up. "Now, dear, you haven't breathed a word of this to mortal? Nor you, Miss Mary? All the better. We don't want to ruin this poor porous vessel out-and-out. There's no need for that; besides he's safe in my hands, if you'll kindly leave him to me." Almost as he spoke, Mr. Macfarlane entered, wonderfully restored already, and but for a certain "bloodshot" in the eyes, quite his natural self. When he saw the Doctor he faltered. The latter surveyed him, smiling quietly. "Just leave us, dears; we want to have a consultation over the patient. Sit down, doctor." And Peter's fingers closing on the fatal D.D., moved it out of the way, giving it a shake en passant. The two sat for half an hour.

When the family assembled at breakfast, the Doctor was in the highest spirits, while Mr. Macfarlane was singularly humble and deferential to him. Desperate as were the odds against him and his cause, Peter Findlater was well nigh a match for them all.

CHAPTER XXV. A ROCK AHEAD FOR PETER.

But in these days the Doctor seemed to be drifting among rocks so numerous and crowded, that as fast as he got rid of one, another as dangerous was to succeed. It was on this very day that Mr. Webber came rushing up to the castle and desired to see Doctor Findlater.

"Oh, Peter! Peter, my poor boy!" he said, when they were alone in the study, "here's the stirabout spilt with a vengeance—I knew there was something going on from the curl on the nose of old Ridley."

"Ah, speak out," said the Doctor, "and don't go driving round by the back way. What is it?"

Then Billy Webber proceeded to explain. "They had made a committee—with turnip-nosed Ridley for chairman——"

"Committee, and for what?" asked the Doctor, turning pale.

"Why to hunt up—to hole and corner it—investigate charges—yes, that is the word—its scandalous——"

"Charges against me?" cried the Doctor. What d'ye—what do they mean?"

"They're going on about you holding an appointment at the hospital, and old Ridley says the guardians and ratepayers owe it to themselves——"

"I despise 'em," said the Doctor, furiously. "Let them do their worst. Let the two gangs—the gang in this house, and the gang in the town join together—I defy them, and shall beat them."

"But, Peter, the worst is, they have been fishing up proofs and papers. That Hickey has been away hunting up this and that. My goodness, Fin, what will you do?"

"What meanness—what ineffable meanness! Grubbing this way behind a man's back for any wild oats he may accidentally put in th' earth. But, Billy, I'll be even with the whole crew!"

"And fancy that cur, Shipton, is one of them—and says, 'he is always for inquiry, and for eliciting the truth.'"

The Doctor was quite speechless at this treachery, which was yet so like his lordship. The clergyman, "old Clarke," was also of the committee, with others upon whose corns he had trodden on various occasions. All were anxious for the truth to be investigated; while Mr. Ridley had hinted at some transactions, the very nature of which made it highly improper that the Doctor should continue in office. The latter was terribly disturbed.

"They want to ruin me," he said, "and they'll do it! I can't fight them all!"

He might well be in trouble. Never since he had started on his wonderful career did our Doctor stand in such peril. What had been taking place all this time was something of this sort:

The unrelenting Ridley, whose dislike and contempt for the Doctor had gone on steadily increasing from the first day, when he had been coolly put down by the Doctor, had ever since prophesied "a bad end," that "the fellow would blow up one of these days;" and had busied himself in writing letters to all sorts of people in the districts where the Doctor had lived, asking for information. Among others he had heard of the old general who had been on a visit to Leadersfort, had seen him, and had been promised by him, "with chapter and verse," a minute account of that most unfortunate transaction in the Doctor's life; but this promise was attended with a reminder that the "Leaders had behaved to him in anything but a straightforward manner, and that it served 'em right; and the thing had best be left as it was." Leave it as it was, indeed! He'd root that scheming Doctor out of the place without mercy. By a sort of accident he had hit upon another muddy passage of the Doctor's life, which was likely to be more damaging still. A clergyman in Ireland told him of a maiden lady, one of his former parishioners, whom the Doctor had persuaded to place three hundred pounds in his hands for investment. This poor lady kept a school which the Doctor attended, and where he made himself most agreeable by his popular manners. But of this by-and-bye. The Doctor was to be informed sooner than he imagined of all that was against him.

When he reached home he found a letter on the table, which contained the following extraordinary communication:

Sir,—It is my duty to inform you, that for some time back a number of rumours highly unfavourable to your character and antecedents have been in circulation in the town. It was felt necessary that such should be duly investigated, as it would be highly improper that a person holding the office you do in a public institution, and besides in daily communication with the leading persons of the district, should be the subject of such discreditable reports. I have, therefore, simply to ask you whether you are willing to submit to a close investigation by a committee, which has been appointed, or whether you would be inclined to save such a painful inquiry by a prompt resignation, and withdrawing yourself from the town. It may help your decision to know that the committee is in possession of important evidence as to these matters, which you can hardly dispute.

I remain, sir, yours,
Ed. Ridley,
Chairman of the Committee.

The Doctor crushed the letter up in his fingers, and flung it on the floor. "Hunted, hunted; always to be hunted! They've got me this time. Oh, ye shabby English beggars!"

He was plunged a long time in reflection. Then addressed himself: "Ah, Peter, you must be a poor, soft lad if you're not a match for these wooden-skulled pipe-stoppers. You'll baulk 'em yet, I'll go bail."

The Doctor little knew how hard his enemies had worked, burrowing, as it were, under ground. Mr. Ridley was determined to root him out of the place. Hence those whisperings and appointed meetings of the committee, and that new-born anxiety "of what we owe to ourselves;" and, finally, Mr. Ridley's own departure on "private business," which was, indeed, to hunt up evidence. His success was beyond his hopes. Through assistance given by Mr. Hickey he had found out the old spinster whose earnings the Doctor was said to have disposed of so improperly, and had arranged matters with her. But a more effectual discovery still was made

at the ancestral seat of the Findlaters, near Macroom, County Cork, where, alas! the Banshee, that old patrimony of the Findlaters, was found never to have been in their hands—for centuries at least.

On the day that the letter was sent to Doctor Findlater, Mr. Ridley had laid some stirring news before the "Committee." For Miss Peck, the spinster, who had long since lost all sight of her deceiver, had written to say she was coming to Tilston in a couple of days, and was ready to confront the knave, and pursue him criminally, if need be. It was time, therefore, to apply the match to the mine; and accordingly the letter was at once sent. The only one who opposed this step was Lord Shipton, who nervously implored of them to take care. "He is such a ready, versatile scoundrel; depend upon it you will be no match for him. I declare you must be cautious."

Alternately very dejected and very furious, the Doctor took his way up to the castle, thinking what he should do. On his way he met his friend Colonel Bouchier, mounted on the strong dray horse that was necessary to carry his bulky figure. The honest colonel, the warmest admirer Fin ever had, at once reined up his horse, and heard the whole story.

"I know it all, my dear Fin," he said. "That mean Shipton, and the rest, have been at it this long time. But anything I can do for you, in any shape, command me. What's this about an old woman I hear they've hunted up—Peck, I think?"

The poor Doctor coloured, for a wonder. "They have found her, have they? Oh, then I may as well give up. My heart's broke, my dear colonel."

"Nothing of the kind; it shan't be. Tell me all about it."

The Doctor here opened his heart as to this unlucky deposit. He told the whole "out of the face." How, thinking to do the best for the poor old soul, he had put the shares into the Munster Railway, of which he was director for a time, and which had gone to smash, as every one knew; with infinite details, to which the honest colonel listened with deep sympathy.

"My dear fellow, is that all? I'll help you, any way. Surely after their getting the old woman over here——"

"O Lord!" cried the Doctor.

"Yes. But I'll go and tackle her myself; leave it to me. Only promise me that. You'll have no trouble with her, I engage to you, either about money or anything else." And the good-natured colonel set his horse in motion, and rode away. The Doctor invoked genuine blessings on him, turned about sharply, and strode home.

After his lunch he got his hat, and set out on a long walk to the next town, to see an advising friend. It was late in the evening when he returned, and a reply reached Mr. Ridley a little later.

FINDLATER v. RIDLEY.

SIR,—The matters affecting my client, Mr. Findlater, of Tilston, and alluded to in your letter of to-day's date, are of so serious a complexion that he has placed the whole affair in my hands. I have advised my client to take no cognisance of the proposal you have made to him until such time as he shall, on advice, find himself prepared to have the matter sifted to the bottom before a competent tribunal, in an action for libel. Such proceedings we intend taking against you personally, and we shall hold you, and your committee, jointly and severally accountable for every further step taken in this matter.

I remain, sir, yours,

THOMAS O'REARDON.

This bold challenge would, as the Doctor calculated, stagger them for a while, "gang of pipe-stoppers" that they were. Indeed, the conspiracy had been worked up to a serious pitch; and in the Leader Arms there were many conversations about what was impending over our hero. It was surprising how few ranged themselves on the side of the man at whose table they had sat again and again, over whose D.D. they had smacked their lips again and again, whose 'avannahs they had smoked, and whose welcome greeting, conversation, and merry jests they had accepted. Rather it was *not* surprising, and only quite after the usual course of things.

The Doctor himself had, indeed, once laid it down jocosely that he knew a man who always looked upon a dinner eaten as an affront. "You see," said the Doctor, "it puts you under a standing obligation, and you saw his three courses and dessert reproaching you in the man's face every time he met you." Those who really remained faithful were the officers and Colonel Bouchier, who pronounced that it was a shame.

"Yes, Mr. Ridley," said the colonel, in the Leader Arms. "I say it's childish work getting together these old women's stories about a man's past life. Which of us, I should like to know, would like to have a policeman's bull's-eye directed full

on. I tell you plainly I'll not help you one bit."

"But this is a very serious thing, Colonel Bouchier. Very serious for us all here. We could not associate longer with a man of that sort."

"*We!*" repeated the colonel, contemptuously. "You're not over particular in these parts, that I can see. Findlater is good enough company any day for the people he's likely to meet here. I know we think him good enough company for ourselves."

"My dear colonel that may be. At messes you take things rather roughly."

The colonel coloured. "I don't know about that. We have certainly had that old Shipton, and we were not over particular there. It's the shabbiest thing I've heard for many a day. I've seen him guzzling at Fin's table over and over again, and now he turns against him. You may all do your worst, but I will stand by Findlater."

It was refreshing to hear this honest warmth, and some faltering waiters on Providence were at once decided by it.

But this was before the receipt of the professional letter on the Doctor's part.

CHRISTMAS UNDER A CLOUD.

When obstinate misrule, combined with military mishaps, had brought the affairs of Charles the First to such a pass that parliament was master of the situation, the foes of festivity were masters of parliament, and did their worst to drive merry-making out of the land, as though mirth were a cardinal vice. Not content with forbidding the celebration of the ancient holidays, the Long Parliament actually ordered Christmas Day to be observed as a day of fasting and humiliation. It came about in this way. Unmindful of the countryman's argument:

> They need not bid a monthy vast,
> Vor if zoo be these times do last,
> 'Twool come to zeaven a week!

the Lords and Commons ordained that the last Wednesday in every month should be kept as a fast day. In 1644, Christmas Day happened to fall upon the last Wednesday in December, a circumstance of which the Assembly of Divines reminded parliament, so that the day might be kept "as it ought to be;" and in obedience to their demand, an ordinance was published commanding the keeping of a fast upon Christmas Day.

To prohibit holiday-making was one thing, to enforce the prohibition another. There were plenty of Englishmen who did not care a straw whether they were ruled by King or Commons, who cared very much indeed about being left to enjoy themselves in their own way, and who were ready enough to give forcible expression to their feelings. In 1647, as Christmas-tide drew near, certain London shopkeepers, who had paid dearly in previous years for attempting to ignore the festival, procured an order that the militia of London and Westminster should prevent such "inconveniences" happening again. The lord mayor also received instructions to prevent Episcopalian clergymen preaching upon Christmas Day, instructions which that official, who kept no Christmas himself, was delighted to carry out. The prentices and porters of Leadenhall, too, afforded him an opportunity for displaying his zeal. While Lord Mayor Warner was deep in militia business at the Guildhall, on Christmas morning, word was brought that the Cornhill conduit had been dressed with evergreens; and holly, ivy, rosemary, and bays set up on the top of a tall building in the middle of the thoroughfare. The city marshal and his man were at once despatched to pull down the green gauds, but that worthy pair found it was not to be done so easily. The marshal himself was very roughly handled, while his man had to run for his life, hotly pursued by the prentice lads of Leadenhall. Escaping them, he fled to the lord mayor to tell of his discomfiture; whereupon the scandalised magistrate mounted his horse, and with the sheriff and a party of halberdiers rode to the scene of action. As soon as the halberdiers began to remove the evergreens, "the boys of sixteen parishes, that came thither to be merry with their lord mayor," set up such a shout that the lord mayor's astonished steed took fright, and coursed through the street in such wild fashion as to upset his rider's dignity, besides putting his bones in jeopardy, while the delighted mob threw up their caps "to see my good lord mayor begin the Christmas play." Some of them were seized by the halberdiers, and sent to the Compter for a day; but Warner seems to have been defeated in his attempt to pull down the obnoxious branches, for we are told that, failing in that design, he fell upon another, and searched the city for superstitious pies and porridge, ransacking pots, robbing ovens, and stripping spits, to the great edification of the righteous, and the chastisement of the wicked—his

own cook included, she being found guilty of some Babylonish baked meats. For this Christmas performance one rhyming assailant of his lordship declared it would be pleasant to see him swinging in his scarlet robes upon the gallows tree, a fate another desired for all such holiday marrers, singing:

Long be their legs, but short their lives,
To pray it is most meet;
And that by twos they may in gyves
Dance "Trenchmore" in the street.
That we may see their cunning pates
Exalted yet on high,
Above the bridge or city gates,
Amen! amen! say I.

The City shops remained closed, their owners fearing the mob more than the parliament. Most of the churches were closed, too; some ministers, however, were bold enough to mount their pulpits; one of these was served with a warrant before he had finished his sermon, and several were taken into custody next day. At St. Margaret's, Westminster, under the very nose of the Commons, not only was a sermon preached, but the church was decorated with evergreens, to answer which grave offences, churchwarden and clerk were brought before the committee whose duty it was to examine and punish such delinquencies. The churchwarden excused himself on the ground that he opened the church at the request of the parishioners, who, having met to consider how they should spend their Christmas, had come to the conclusion that as few would work and none open shop upon Christmas Day, they might draw people into church to hear a sermon, who would else misspend their time in taverns; as to the greenery, for that the sexton was responsible. The committee had still another grievance, and asked why a preacher who had always been against parliament was selected to hold forth on the occasion? To which Mr. Churchwarden replied, that the clergyman in question had, not long before, preached at Chelsea, before some of the members, and if he were permitted to preach at Chelsea, he could not see why he might not do the same at Westminster. The committee, struck by this argument, let the argumentative churchwarden off with an admonition.

In the country, folks were so determined to have their Christmas sermon, that in many places the church doors were guarded by armed gentlemen, until the minister descended from the pulpit. In Ipswich, the few who paid no honour to the day were violently attacked, and the mayor suffered much indignity. Some of the disturbers of the peace were arrested and sent to prison, which only increased the tumult, and, by a singular fatality, a man named Christmas was killed; or, in the words of the reporter — who might have held his own with any modern penny-a-liner—poor Christmas "had a period put to his natural life." A still more serious hubbub was raised at Canterbury, where the crier had proclaimed that a market would be held upon Christmas Day. So little regard was paid to the announcement that not more than a dozen tradesmen took down their shutters, and they, upon refusing to put them up again, had their wares scattered right and left, and their shops closed for them. In vain the mayor and his officers tried to quell the riot; one man, being struck with a cudgel by the mayor himself, knocked his worship down, tearing his cloak and damaging him generally. As soon as he recovered his feet and his breath, the mayor read the Riot Act (or the equivalent of the period) amid the derisive hooting of the mob. The people then moved off to the High-street and started a couple of foot-balls, while the authorities endeavoured to take their prisoners to jail; the populace, however, followed in their wake, broke the head of the governor of the prison, rescued their friends, hunted the mayor and aldermen into their houses, and then amused themselves by smashing the windows of every one opposed to Christmas keeping. Next day, being Sunday, all remained quiet, but at noon on Monday the riot broke out afresh. One White, a barber, had been appointed captain of the guard set to watch the city gates; he bade a man stand, upon which the latter called him a Roundhead; then White drew a pistol, fired, and the man fell. Through the city ran the news that a man had been killed, and forth rushed the people armed with clubs. The gates were pulled down, and raising the cry, "For God, King Charles, and Kent," the men of the county flocked in to aid the malcontents. The mayor and aldermen disappeared; the bellicose barber was dragged out of a hayloft and severely mauled, and, in attempting to save him, the sheriff got his head broken in two places; "it was God's mercy his brains were not beaten out, but it should seem he had a clung pate of his own." All the prisoners in the jail were set free, the magazine at the town-hall robbed of its arms, and all that night the rioters were lords of Canterbury. Next morning some of the leading citizens intervened, and upon their guarantee that no man should be troubled about the matter,

the arms were given up, and order was restored. Parliament, however, set the agreement at naught, and determined to make an example of the offenders. A commission was sent down to try the leaders of the Christmas party, but the grand jurymen would not find a true bill; nevertheless, the commissioners were instructed to persevere, but before long the Kentish men rose in arms and gave such trouble to the parliamentary forces, that, fearing the infection might spread Londonwards, a general indemnity was granted, and the too enthusiastic lovers of old customs escaped scot-free.

Year after year the parliament continued to set an example to the nation by sitting upon Christmas Day, but the example did not prove contagious, at least as far as the Londoners were concerned. "The malignant citizens were not filled with grace, but with meat, and were drunk with wine, but not filled with the spirit." Whether their rulers liked it or no, the people would make merry at Christmas-tide somehow or another. The prentices of London, never famed for patience, did not quietly acquiesce in the loss of their time-honoured holidays, but so badgered parliament with remonstrances and petitions, that at last an ordinance appeared, declaring the necessity of apprentices, scholars, and servants having time for recreation, and ordering that they should have reasonable recreation in the second Tuesday in every month, as they were used to have on their old festivals; any difference on that score between master and man to be settled by the nearest justice of the peace.

Christmas, despite the efforts of its foes, was only scotched, not killed, for in 1652, while the House of Commons was sitting upon Christmas Eve, a terrible remonstrance was presented, praying it to abolish Christmas Day altogether. Parliament replied by resolving that the markets should be kept the following day, that no solemnity should be observed in churches, and that shopkeepers should be protected in carrying on their business. These resolutions seem to have been limited to London, and were effectual in one respect, for Evelyn records, in his diary, "Christmas Day. No sermon anywhere, no church being permitted to be opened; so observed it at home;" but, according to the Weekly Intelligencer of the same date, an open shop was as rare as a phœnix or bird of paradise, while taverns and ale-houses were crowded with customers. A very different story is told, however, by Taylor, the water poet, who put forth an energetic protest on behalf of the old festival, in the shape of The Complaint of Christmas, printed at the charge of the author, who frankly owns "he will refuse no gratuities of words or deeds from anybody." Despite this confession of neediness, Taylor speaks out as though he was not afraid of offending the hot, jealous brethren who, with a "superbian predominance," sought to keep Christmas out of old England, where he had hitherto received the warmest of welcomes. The poet puts his complaint into the mouth of the jovial merrymaker, and mournful is the tale he tells. Coming fresh from the kingdom of Christendom, in which he had been received with mirth and merry cheer, Christmas landed in England on the 25th of December, expecting his wonted entertainment at English hands. But, alas! the case was altered. He found the whole frame of the kingdom turned topsy-turvy. He gazed about him, and saw churches with steeples, and houses with chimneys, but heard no jocund bells, and saw no smoke to assure him that there was such a thing as a fire in the land. No sign, no token of holiday-making; the shops were all open, the markets full, the watermen rowing, the carmen loading and unloading, the porters staggering under big burdens, and all the tradesmen busy at their callings. After walking through streets, lanes, and alleys, till benumbed with the cold weather and colder entertainment, Christmas went up to a cobbler, hammering away in his stall, and asked him what Old Christmas had done to deserve such treatment? The cobbler replied it was a pity Christmas had ever been born, being, as he was, a papist, an idolatrous brat of the beast, an old reveller sent from Rome, but now "he praised the Lord and the godly parliament that their eyes were opened to see their anti-Christian error, and that now the clear sunshine of the Word had, by the operation of the Spirit, illuminated their understandings, and enlightened them out of Egyptian darkness." In vain the astonished wayfarer reasoned with the son of Crispin, who bade him cease prattling, as he hindered his repairing an alderman's shoes. Disgusted and dismayed, he turned his steps countrywards, meeting, on his way, a disestablished parson, who poured into his ears a melancholy story, only interrupted by the sudden appearance of a tumultuous multitude, "more clamorous for the redress of real grievances than fifteen parliaments could satisfy." Grocers lamenting they sold no

fruit and spices for plum pottage, mince-pies, and other cookery kickshaws; while mercers, drapers, silkmen, tailors, shoemakers, cooks, and traders of all sorts and conditions, cried out they were undone by the banishment of their old friend and benefactor. Apprentices, kitchen-maids, butlers, bakers, and brewers' draymen, came cursing, crying, and stamping because they were cheated out of their Christmas-boxes. Plough-swains and labourers cried out against being deprived of the harmless sports, merry gambols, and dances wherewith they had recreated themselves once a year—all extinct since the merry lords of misrule had been suppressed by the mad lords of bad rule at Westminster. Nay, their madness had extended to the very vegetables. Holly, ivy, mistletoe, bay, and rosemary were accounted branches of superstition. To roast a sirloin of beef, to touch a collar of brawn, to bake a pie, to put a plum in a pottage-pot, to burn a big candle, or to lay one log the more upon the fire for Christmas' sake, was enough to make a man be suspected and taken for a Christian, and punished accordingly; till poor Christmas was fain to cry in despair: "Can any Christian or Colchester man tell Old Christmas where he is? Is this England or Turkey that I am in?"

Cromwell vetoed church preaching altogether, but when Christmas came round there were always found some ministers prepared to set the great Protector's orders at defiance. In 1657, it was thought necessary to issue an order in council to the effect that, whereas by several ordinances of parliament the festivals of Christmas, Easter, and other feasts commonly called holidays, had been taken away; it was specially recommended to the lord mayor and aldermen of the City of London, and the justices of Westminster and Southwark, to take care the said ordinances were duly observed, and the forbidden solemnities prevented. Evelyn, like many others, thought to celebrate his Christmas Day in orthodox fashion, all ordinances to the contrary notwithstanding, and came up to London to hear Mr. Gunning preach at Exeter Chapel. "The sermon over," says the diarist, "the chapel was surrounded with soldiers, and all the communicants and assembly surprised and kept prisoners by them, some in the house, others carried away. It fell to my share to be confined to a room in the house, where I was permitted to dine with the master of it. In the afternoon came Colonels Whalley, Goffe, and others from Whitehall to examine us one by one; some they committed to the marshal, some to prison. When I came before them they examined me why, contrary to the ordinance made that none should any longer observe the superstitious time of the Nativity, I durst offend, and particularly be at common prayers, which were but the mass in English?" Evelyn condescended to argue the matter with the Whitehall colonels, his eloquence so far availing him that the saintly soldiers dismissed him in pity of his ignorance. "These," says he, "were men of high flight and above ordinances, and spake spiteful things of our Lord's Nativity."

Christmas was not to be much longer under ban. When, three years afterwards, Mr. Pepys went to church on Christmas morning, he found his pew covered with rosemary and bays, and had the pleasure of hearing a good sermon. After dining off a good shoulder of mutton and a chicken, he went to church again with his wife, to be sent to sleep by a dull discourse from a strange parson; for which he made amends a day or two afterwards by making himself ill with too much eating and drinking. The following year he and Mrs. Pepys indulged themselves with cakes and ale at a tavern in Moorfields, where his ears were regaled by the singing of wenches with their wassail bowls; a tolerable proof that Christmas once more asserted its sway, and that its devotees were justified in singing

> The vicar is glad,
> The clerk is not sad,
> And the parish cannot refrain
> To leap and rejoice,
> And lift up their voice,
> That the king enjoys his own again;

for not only did King Charles enjoy his own again, but King Christmas, after nearly twenty years' exile, again made merry with his loyal subjects.

IN THE FIELD WITH THE PRUSSIANS.

A BATTLE-FIELD.

It was a bright October day, no cloud obscured the clear blue sky, and Versailles looked her best, as she basked in the sun. To be sure, the black and white flag of Germany floated overhead, and a park of Prussian field artillery filled the Place d'Armes; but the good people of Versailles had long been accustomed to such sights, and although many a mournful look was cast at the sombre flag, and many a sigh was given for the time when the gay tri-

colour should once more take its proper place, the good townspeople knew their interests too well to show any signs of hostility to the foreigners. It was past noon, and the grandees of the German army, after lunching at the Hôtel des Reservoirs, were tranquilly enjoying their cigars. Prince Hohenzollern had mounted his black charger; the Prince of Wurtemberg stood beside his spotless snow-white Arab, buttoning his glove preparatory to a start; the very wind seemed to pause and listen.

The frightful roar of a heavy gun broke the spell. At the first discharge I held my breath. The little butcher-boy with his basket stood suddenly still, and, with head forward, in an attitude of the utmost attention, listened. Young ladies, starting for a walk in the palace gardens, stood irresolute as to whether they should proceed. Their minds were soon made up, however, as the heavy "boom, boom" broke the tranquillity again and again, while little white clouds, marking the descent of bursting shells, floated away over the trees. Hark! what is that distant trumpet note? It comes nearer, the bugler stops exactly opposite me, and putting the brass trumpet to his lips, blows the warning note of danger. A minute's pause, then his message seemed to work like electricity. The grandees threw away their choice cigars, buckled their long swords tightly round their waists; some returned to the Reservoirs, to drink a last stirrup-cup; others mounted their steeds, and darted off to head their regiments; a few stood still, to listen to the heavy thuds of the great guns from Fort Valerien, or to grasp some friend's hand preparatory to a parting which, perhaps, would be for ever.

The Place d'Armes was instantly alive with a swarming mass. Soldiers poured into it from all sides. Each man knew where his division, his regiment, his company stood; there was no noise, no confusion. Each man was in his place, not one seemed missing. "Fix bayonets!" "March!" and the serried ranks of mighty Prussia, with their helmets, bayonets, and shining accoutrements glistening in the sun's rays, their standards unrolled and their drums beating the advance, marched with firm step, to meet, in many cases, an agonising death. There was no flinching, no bravado; each seemed impressed with the sort of work he had to do, and seemed to have made up his mind to do it; the tightened lip and the fixed eye were all that told their resolution. The townspeople shuddered as they passed; and many a fair French girl turned pale as she, no doubt, thought of François, who had only left her side three months ago, and would now have to meet these dreaded "Prussians." Then came the field artillery. Each gun followed by its eight artillerymen, six sturdy horses trotted the cannon along; then rode by the cavalry, the dreaded Uhlans in the van, and, following in their wake, the dashing dragoons and the ponderous cuirassiers. One splendid-looking Landwehr officer caught my eye as he passed. I had often noticed him before; he had a face on which calm courage was indelibly stamped, and his form was herculean. To-day his bright glance was, for some reason, dimmed by sorrow. I know not what emotion brought it there. I felt drawn to him irresistibly. I followed him with my eyes till his black helmet had faded in the distance.

The town cleared rapidly of troops; only a guard was left at the palace, and a few pickets piled their long needle-guns before the gates of the town. There was a buzz in the crowd which lines the St. Germain road, which hushed suddenly at the sight of a small cavalcade of Uhlans. On they came, with lances erect, their little black and white pennons fluttering in the breeze; then appeared a large open chaise drawn by four horses. The king and General Moltke were inside, grave and engaged in earnest conversation; they scarcely noticed passing salutes. Following the carriage came the king's staff, composed of officers dressed in all the varied costumes of the great army. Next rode the grooms, each leading an extra horse, and a squadron of Uhlans brought up the rear. Again the crowd became excited, and as the sound of battle seemed approaching, cries of "Vive la France," and "à bas les Prussiens," echoed through the streets and avenues, but again the storm lulled, as another body of horsemen appeared over the brow of the hill. It was the Crown Prince and his staff. They rode quickly by. I followed, as two of the officers were friends of mine, and beckoned me to accompany them. We galloped to a spot from whence we could see the battle spread out like a map. Massed on the slope of Mont Valerien stood a large body of about twelve thousand French. They stood immediately under the guns of the fort, and were flanked on their left by two or three compact, but smaller, clumps of troops. In front of these, at the bottom of the green slope, in a south-westerly direction, the French attacked with great spirit the line regiments of the ninth and tenth Prussian divisions. The Prussian outposts and advance-posts were driven in on the

main body, and the French tactics seemed directed against the village of Bougival, which lies close to the Seine. Between this and Garches, which is situated on the other side of this tongue of land, and also near the river, the sloping plain is dotted by woods, which extend for a considerable distance back towards Vaucresson; in these woods the Prussians stood to meet the French onset. The onset was made in a curious but plucky way down the slope: before the skirmishers came two field-pieces and a mitrailleuse; these dashed at a gallop, bump, bump over every obstacle; then with a quickness that did their drill great credit, the horses turned the muzzle of the guns towards the enemy, and the gunners pounded away into the woods to their heart's content. It was hard work, however, for the Prussians stand like walls even when without cover, and are particularly stubborn when under protection of woods or houses. The rattle of musketry was incessant; it was like a continuous volley, the smoke of which seemed to emerge from everything around. The French troops posted on the hill, under the Valerien guns, never moved an inch the whole day, but kept firing incessant volleys at the Prussians posted to the right of Bougival. The artillery seemed also to be doing its work, for ever and anon the rattle of the volleys was drowned by the awful boom of the heavy fort guns; while throughout the infernal music ran the newest battle sound—I mean the horrible rat-ta-tat-tat-tat of the mitrailleuse. Simple as the sound may look on paper, there is something horrible about it; something quite distinct from the noise made by any other weapon.

At about half-past three the French seemed vigorously to be pushing on; they were making for a ridge which was the stand-point of the Prussians. Where was the deadly Prussian artillery? Presently the French seemed to catch sight of a new enemy on their flank, for they stopped, and with a crab-like motion appeared to be drawing slowly backwards. The hidden enemy at last emerged; it was the Landwehr of the Guard. Shoulder to should they pressed on. The French retreated in disorder; a whole body of them threw away their arms and fled. There was a dash of cavalry into the smoke, and out again, up a hill. Two or three horsemen fell, but the two cannons and the mitrailleuse were taken. The Germans, having repulsed the sortie, now made a retrograde movement. It was about half-past four. The dispirited French turned round once more, and seemed inclined to renew the contest, some of the reserves coming to their aid; but General Kirchbach was too wise to allow his Prussians to be cut to pieces by Mont Valerien projectiles, in following up their advantages. The French sullenly fired a few shells after the enemy, which illumined the gathering gloom, and returned to their capital, their forts, and their ramparts, to tell the excited Parisians of their individual deeds of prowess, or to mourn over the strength of the iron girdle which encircled the city.

The last volley had been fired, and the night set in cold and dismal enough. I followed some ambulances to the battle-field, procured a lantern, and started alone to tend the wounded and dying. Slung at my waist was one of my large saddle-bags, which contained charpie, bandages, instruments, &c., a bottle of brandy at each side, and a large flask of water, completed my equipment. I shall never forget the chill that crept over me as I came nearer and nearer to the field of slaughter. I made my way through the woods. Hearing somebody groaning heavily, I screwed up my courage, and walked towards him. When I approached I found it was a poor wounded Prussian, who took little or no notice of me. He was beside himself with pain. I asked him where his wound was. He said it was through the stomach. I took out of my bag a bottle of laudanum, poured out fifteen drops, and mixed it with a little water in the cup of my flask. It was taken thankfully, and without a question. I then wrote on a card, in German—"wound through abdomen, tinctura opii xv." This I put on the top button of his great-coat. Then I applied some charpie, moistened with water, to the wounds; told him to remember his card, should he be taken to another doctor, and wrapping him up as warmly as I could, I left him to attend to others. They were easily to be found—to the right, to the left, and in front, the German cry of "Herr Jesus!" was intermingled with the distressing French groan of "Mon Dieu, mon Dieu!" Some were sitting, some leaning against the trees; some called for water, others for help. I almost wished that I had been wounded too; it was so dreadful not to be able to help them all at once. One poor fellow, shot through the breast, could not speak; but while I was attending to his wounded comrade beside him he kept pulling my coat-tails, and whenever I turned

round he, in a beseeching manner, pointed to his wound. There was something so sad in this mute distress, that it powerfully affected me. Near him sat a Frenchman who had been making such an awful howl, that it made me doubt the severity of his wound. I found he had only received a ball in the calf of his leg. It was easily extracted, but had I been taking the man's leg off without chloroform he could not have made more noise. He stood pain very badly, and the contrast to his poor German neighbour, who was fast sinking, was very great.

I now came to a little clearing in the wood. Just as I stepped into the open a gust of wind blew out my lantern. I had no matches. I crept cautiously along, but it was pitch dark, and I could not see an inch before me. I had not gone many yards when I stumbled over a body; I spoke, there was no answer; I put my hand over the face, it was cold; I got up, and again I stumbled over a second body. I felt for matches in a dead man's pocket; to my delight I found a pipe, and of course matches. I lighted my candle in the lantern, and then holding it above my head I surveyed the scene before me. To my dying day I shall never forget it; stretched out like a fan, with their feet towards a common centre, lay eight men near the middle of the clearing; between them and the side of the wood I had just emerged from, were the two corpses I had stumbled over, and in this little space five others lay dead also. I was horrified; fifteen dead men, and I the only living person near them; oh! how dreadful was that silence! I shivered from head to foot. Just as I was lowering my lantern, after viewing this ghastly spectacle, one of the supposed dead in the centre moved; it brought my scattered senses back again. I went to the wounded man; he had received a frightful scalp wound, and looked, from his face being covered with blood, almost unearthly; his eyes rolled in their sockets. I felt for a fracture, but could find none. I spoke to him; he answered. I asked him why he did not go away; he pointed to his knee; I ripped the trouser open, his knee-cap had been completely blown away. I dressed his wounds, took the great-coat from the knapsack of a dead man lying near and wrapped him in it, for he was shivering with the cold. As I was leaving he said, "Ah, that was a fearful bad shell; we are only half of what it hurt, the rest have crawled away." Of the seven others, six were stone dead. The Mont Valerien shell had indeed done its work; the other still lived, but how? I will not harrow your feelings by answering the question; his lips were blue; he murmured "Wasser, wasser;" I handed him my flask. I knew nothing could be done for him. At that moment I saw the gleam of a light coming towards me through the trees. Two krankenträgers, or sick-carriers, stopped in the wood to pick up a wounded man. I went to them and told them of the men in the clearing, and they promised to return at once. I now thought my work was done, and making my way towards the road leading to Garches, I came to what seemed to be a field; many lights were flitting about, and wounded men were being carried to the village. I saw a light stationary at a spot not far distant, and could hear the thud, thud of a pickaxe. I knew what that meant, and turned away; helmets and knapsacks were lying about in all directions. I then passed some vineyards, where there had been some heavy fighting. From the amount of débris all the wounded seemed to have been taken away, but many dead lay about. I had now almost got into the road, when out of the darkness I heard a low call for water; I hastened to the spot, and in a ditch I found a man lying on his back, breathing heavily. I gave him water, then set about finding out where his wound was; his shirt was hot, wet, and red; I tore it open; in doing so I knocked my lantern over. As I relighted it I saw the man's face; it was ghastly pale, and death was there, but I knew it, and uttered a cry of horror. It was the Landwehr officer I had seen that morning in all the vigour of manly health, and now, only ten hours afterwards, I was to find him dying. I plugged the great hole in his chest lightly with charpie moistened with water, took a Frenchman's great-coat and wrapped him in it, and left him there to seek a couple of krankenträgers. I was away about twenty or twenty-five minutes; to my horror when I returned with the men, the handsome lieutenant was dead, and his coat and waistcoat were gone. I looked round, then ran down the road for five minutes towards Garches to catch the robber who, if he had done nothing worse, had robbed the dead, but could see no one. I returned; the two krankenträgers were standing by the corpse. I examined the neck; there were no marks of violence, so I hoped the bright spirit had fled before those vultures of the battle-field had rifled the poor corpse.

Yes, such is war. Can anything justify the causes of such a scene as I have tried

to portray? Yet, what I can tell is scarcely one-twentieth part as horrible as the awful reality; the scenes haunt me even now like an ugly nightmare, and are ever before me. If this is enough to cause sadness in one, who has only tried to alleviate such sufferings, what ought to be the feelings of monarchs who wilfully or thoughtlessly inflict the horrors and unspeakable miseries of war on their fellow-men?

A SLEEPING HOMESTEAD.

THE meadows slumber fair beneath the moon,
While wakes the watchful river at their feet,
And all the air is filled with odours sweet,
The breath of flowers that shall unfold full soon.

In mazy mystery the forest hides,
And straggling trees have caught a sylvan grace;
The sleeping farm-house shows its placid face
Between the shadows where the grove divides

Still are the sparrows nested in the thatch,
And still the callow larks beneath the brake;
The startled doves with tender coo awake
As bays the moon-struck mastiff on his watch.

Now warmer light upon the welkin lies,
And deeper night intensifies the peace;
Only the river moves and will not cease
Its swift, up-searching glances to the skies.

By blooming white-thorn and by climbing rose,
I know the nook where dreams the maiden sweet;
Honest her heart as sheaves of goodly wheat,
Fairer her face than any flower that blows.

I know the chamber where the old folks rest,
With hearts at peace and all their labour done;
Where ruddy children sleep till shines the sun,
Where breathes the baby, warm in mother's breast.

I know the barn where safe from midnight chill
The weary beggar snores amid the hay,
Waiting the first red warning of the day
To grasp his staff and cross the distant hill.

God hath the simple homestead in his eye,
And sometimes in a solemn hour like this
He sheds about it dreams of promised bliss,
With mellow moonlight from the summer sky.

NEW YEAR'S DAY IN SCOTLAND.

A STRANGER arriving in some Scottish town towards the close of December could not fail to be impressed by the fact that something quite unusual was disturbing the canny folks of that said town, which, let us say, is the "grey old metropolis of the North." And if he made further inquiries regarding it, he would soon learn that the festive appearance of things was due to the near approach of the New Year.

On the greasy pavements is an unusual amount of orange-peel, and through the hazy fog you can see an unusual amount of dainty cakes in the confectioners' windows. Buns of all shapes, sizes, and qualities; and endless cakes of short-bread, ornamented with thistles and mottoes in candied orange-peel, such as Here's a gude New Year, or Hoo's a' wi' ye? Fra a friend, Fra ye ken wha, and so on, are everywhere prominent, and customers are not wanting to purchase these good things, considered by every family — unless the very poorest — quite indispensable to a proper "keepin' the New Year." At the greengrocers' doors are hanging the bunches of laurel, holly, and mistletoe, and in the butchers' and poulterers' shops the festive beef, geese, and turkeys with which we are all familiar, as the sine quâ nons of Christmas cheer. The never frantically-busy streets of Edinburgh are more than ordinarily alive with an easy, sauntering, gravely-festive throng of idlers. Most of the younger holiday-seekers are indulging in comestibles, and in and over all prevails an undoubted odour of whisky and oranges. Altogether there seems more than enough of whisky drinking, and somewhat more than the run of drunken men do penance at the police-court in the morning. In the evening, especially if you live in the suburbs, or in the country, within easy reach of a town, you will be alarmed by a noise and singing outside the door, the explanation of which is afforded in the announcement of the housemaid: "Please, sir, the guizards hev come; shall I give them anything?"

The guizards, or gisers, are the Scottish representatives of the old English mummers, who are again lineal descendants of the masqueraders of the Roman saturnalia. For some weeks before, the village boys have been carefully rehearsing some favourite Scottish ballad, and now that the New Year time is drawing near, they gather in bands of twos and threes, and go round the better class of houses in improvised masks, singing these ballads, with many quaint antics. They are generally accompanied by an attendant, armed with a broom, who is called "Bessie." Bessie's duty is to sweep the floor, and to make herself as amusing as possible, in return for an equal share in the proceeds of the entertainment. The reward for this performance is generally a halfpenny, or if it be very near the New Year, perhaps a piece of cake.

Christmas Day is a festival not much observed in Scotland, though within late years, among the better class of people, especially in the towns where an imitation of everything English is rapidly gaining ground, it is beginning to be observed as a feast day, and "the Christmas holidays" is now the common term applied to what, in former times, were called "the New Year Play Days." Boxing Day is quite unknown in Scotland, though the "boxes" are much

too valuable an institution to be always passed over by those whom they concern, and under the name of handsels they are duly inquired after a few days later. Hogmanay is the 31st of December, and then children are from time immemorial informed that if they go to the corner they will see a man with as many eyes as days in the year. Whether the word was derived from the Greek *ἁγια μηνη* (the holy moon) or from the Scandinavian Hoggu-nott, or from the French, au gui mener (to lead to the mistletoe), it will hardly do to inquire too closely in this place. However, without attaching either a philological or a theological significance to the day, housewives in country places in Scotland are occupied for a day or two previously in preparing for Hogmanay. Then the children of the poorer people go about from door to door either with a large pocket fastened to their dress, or with a sheet-shawl, or plaid, so folded about them as to leave a large fold in front. Each child gets an oat-cake, or a piece of cheese, or sometimes, if the donor be very liberal or the children especial favourites, a sweet cake, and so from door to door they go until in the evening they have a plentiful supply of homely New Year cheer to carry home to their family. This is the original custom, but now-a-days, like many other customs, it is dying away, children going for their Hogmanay to the houses of their friends more as a custom than from any desire for the gifts then distributed. At no time, however, were these Hogmanay cakes ever looked upon as eleemosynary. They were rather looked upon as a right, established by time-honoured custom. When the children come to the door they troll out some old rhyme, which would afford plenty material for antiquarian research. Thus one of them is:

Hogmanay
Trollolay.

This may seem a mere senseless rhyme without meaning, unless we adopt the suggestion of some antiquaries that it is a corruption of the French—Homme est né—Trois Rois lá—(a man is born; three kings are here)—in allusion to the birth of Christ and the visit of the Wise Men from the East, who were known in mediæval times as the three kings. Another rhyme very commonly used is:

Get up, gude wife, and shak' yer feathers,
And dinna think that woo* are beggars;
For woo are bairns† come oot to play,
Get up and gie's oor hogmanay.

* We. † Children.

Another is suggestive of the dry humour, but, at the same time, pious vein of the nation:

Get up, gude wife, and be nae sweir,*
And dale† yer breed‡ to them that's here;
For the time will come when ye'll be deed,
And then ye'll neither need ale nor breed.

It is not always, however, that the impatient troubadour can stay so long as is required for the recitation of the above verses, and a much more frequent couplet is this:

My feet's could, my shoon's§ thin,
Gie's my cakes, and let me rin!

On Hogmanay night in the town, as on Christmas Eve in England, the streets and shops are crowded with festively-inclined people a-marketing against the morrow's dinner. Family men give a supper-party to a select lot of friends, warranted as of the right sort. The express object of the invitation is to sit (which means also to eat and drink) the Old Year out and the New Year in. And this is done with all honour, being, if there are many young folks in the party, as often danced in as not. Then, as the clock "chaps" twelve, friend congratulates friend, and wish each other "a gude New Year, and mony o' them."

Then with great formality the door is unbarred to let the Old Year out and the New Year in. By this time the het (hot) pint is produced, a hot spiced compound of which, it is needless to say, the national beverage is the chief component. Of this all the guests partake, and it used to be the custom in Edinburgh for parties armed with this instrument of hospitality to sally forth into the streets, which were then more crowded than at mid-day, to first-foot their acquaintances, or treat to a glass of this any acquaintance whom they met, by whom they were in turn asked to taste. This led to much joviality as well as—it must be confessed—to much drunkenness; but New Year, like Christmas "comes but once a year," and though paterfamilias and others mentally and audibly vowed, when they woke up early on the forenoon of the 1st of January, that this should be their last bout of first-footing, regularly as the year came round they forgot their vows, and were as jovial at it as ever. Now-a-days this—in towns at least—is almost entirely gone out of fashion, except among the lower classes, or with some wild young men. The wassail bowl, of which the het pint was the Scottish equivalent, has also to a great extent gone out of fashion—at least as an element of first-footing—the cruder bottle of whiskey supplying its place. Let

* Be not unwilling. † Deal. ‡ Bread. § Shoes.

us issue forth a few minutes before twelve, and walk down the South Bridge until we come to where the old Tron kirk stands at the intersection of the North and South Bridge, and the High-street and Lawnmarket in Edinburgh. There are a goodly number of people in the streets, many of whom have obviously been spending the last day of the year in the method in which, to all appearance, they will spend the first. As we approach Hunter-square, there is a large increase in the number of jovial mortals, who are bent on offering us spirituous hospitality backed with the irrefragable logic of that being "Noo Yeer time, mon!" and round the church is assembled a crowd of from five hundred to a thousand persons, waiting until the clock —which the town authorities have kindly left illuminated up to this time—shall proclaim that a New Year has commenced. All eyes are now on the clock—the hands approaching the mystic hour of midnight. The noise is hushed when one stroke is heard, and until the twelve sound out. Then friends shake hands with friends, and everybody who has had the self-denial to keep it concealed until now, pulls forth his bottle, and presses one and all to partake. It may be remarked that owing to the Forbes M'Kenzie Act all the public-houses have been closed an hour ago. When they were open to all hours, the assemblage at the Tron kirk was even more popular than now. In a very few minutes the crowd separates in a very orderly manner; decent family men of the working classes compare notes with each other as they go home to wish the wife and bairns a happy New Year, regarding the crowd at the Tron in this and former years.

The old folk go off to bed, but many of the young ones will not be there for hours yet. Each girl is expecting the first-foot from her sweetheart, and anxious to be the first to open the door to him, and much quiet stratagem is sometimes spent in the endeavour to outwit her, and get the old grandmother, or some dooce serving-lass to be the first to meet the kiss-expecting lover. Quieter folks will put off their first footing until morning, but in nearly all Scottish families the first-foot is looked upon as a matter of no little importance, and notes will be compared among neighbours in country villages as to who was their first-foot-luck or ill-luck, according to the character of the visitor. It is very unlucky to come empty-handed; accordingly all such visitors are provided with a bottle, which it is expected that all those who are up shall taste, while he in his turn is regaled with similar New Year cheer. A red-haired person, or a splay-footed one, is also an exceedingly unlucky first-foot: these are carefully guarded against. Often it happens in remote country houses that for days there are no visitors, and that the first-foot is not unfrequently the wandering "gaberlunzie," or beggar, who is, however, invariably informed of the fact, and treated to a drain and other good cheer, in accordance with time-honoured usage. Until within the last few years a curious first-footing on a wholesale scale was the custom in the remote and somewhat primitive parish of Deerness, in the Orkney Islands. Large parties of old and young, of the commoner class of people, would assemble in a band on the last night of the year, and go on a round of visits throughout the district. At each house they would stop and sing a long song, apparently the work of pre-Reformation times, and so full of allusions to the Virgin, that had the strictly orthodox Protestants who sung it understood the allusions, they would have been shocked. After this, they made a rush into the house on the door being opened, and were plentifully treated to such cheer as the house afforded. This was repeated from house to house, until the singers must have made a tolerably (or intolerably) large supper! Any farmer who was passed by in this New Year's serenade, looked upon it as the greatest slight that could be offered to him. The verses were sung to a tune of their own, and may be found not incorrectly given in that curious repertory of Old World stories—Chambers's Book of Days.

New Year's Day itself in Edinburgh is one of boisterous eating and drinking. Crowds perambulate the streets from early morning to night. A universal holiday is observed. People who are not drinking are assuredly eating oranges. All the fish-barrows are carefully cleaned out, and the proprietors dressed very sprucely, for the sale of oranges. One of these hawkers, whom I had the curiosity to question on the subject, assured me that he will often sell on a New Year's Day from five to six large crates of oranges. The Scottish people do not visit each other much on New Year's Day, in this respect differing widely from the Americans, among whom that is the great day for exchanging visits. These visits in Scotland are confined to members of the family, as is also the New Year's dinner.

It is, however, a jovial time, and many old family feuds are healed up that day over the roast goose (the invariable dish) and the whisky-toddy, which must of necessity follow. A dancing-party generally winds up the day, and the members retire to bed at a much earlier hour than they did the night before. New Year has now tolerably well ended, but still it would be looked upon, in old-fashioned families, as a great breach of courtesy if a piece of cake or wine was not offered to visitors for some weeks after the New Year's Day, and intimate friends or neighbours will invite each other in to partake of their cakes. The first Monday of the New Year is called Handsel Monday, and on this day the "boxes," so well known to English householders, are called for. It is rarely, if ever, that any one would think of asking for them before that date. It is also often observed as a holiday, and the rural marksmen have frequently a shooting match, or "wapenshaw," on that day. In some part of the country New Year, old style (12th of January), is still observed, and to this year the common holiday among the rural population is Auld Handsel Monday, that is, the first Monday after the 12th of January. On that day Scottish farmers used to treat their servants to a good breakfast, with copious libations of whisky and ale, the rest of the day being a holiday, usually spent in visiting friends. At Burghead, on the southern shore of the Moray Firth, about nine miles from Elgin, a strange Druidical custom called Burning the Clavie, a sort of image composed of combustible materials, is observed among the fishing population on New Year's Eve (old style), a description of which ceremony may be found in the work already mentioned. Nearly every trade has its traditional number of days which they observe as New Year's holidays, these holidays being nearly always spent in a right royal debauch, the tailors being popularly supposed to carry off the palm both in the intensity and duration of their New Year's spree. Such a saturnalia is this, that in Scotland they are commonly called the daft, or foolish days; but even the daft days come to an end, and the people resume their quiet sober characteristics. A popular rhyme, composed before the Reformation, has reference to this:

> Yule's come and yule's gane,
> And we hae feasted weel;
> Sae Jock maun to his flail again
> And Jenny to her wheel.

Unless, indeed, it be prolonged as far as that of a gentleman whom the writer observed, one warm July day, making his most unsteady way down one of the steep streets of the New Town of Edinburgh. He had obviously dined, and the salmon had had the usual effect upon his memory, for as the old gentleman wiped his perspiring brow, I overheard him continually ejaculating to himself, in a reproachful tone of voice, "It's been an awfu' New Year! It's been an awfu' New Year!"

THE JERICHO THEATRE.

Daringly ambitious, undeterred by failures, and feeling acutely the humiliation of being a new district without historical associations, yet in wealth and substance vastly superior to older quarters, with all their pretension, Jericho lately determined to have a theatre of its own. There was a fine feeling of elasticity in this resolve, for the failure of the Jericho Rooms* was still recent. Not that we could go so far as to say that the "municipality" contracted a loan, or that the "town" built a theatre, as they do in foreign countries. No. It was all private enterprise that built the Theatre Royal, Jericho. When we say private enterprise, a nicer accuracy might require it to be stated that it was a well-known public builder of the district; and when we say built, the phrase should be rather "conversion." He converted an existing building. A simple methodist chapel had been as much a failure in its own line as our Jericho Rooms; and it was a curious compensation that while the Jericho Rooms were eagerly offered as eligibly convertible into a chapel, the chapel should be as eagerly proposed as eligible for conversion into a theatre.

It was curious to pass by and see the alterations going on, so gradually and silently. All the work was from within. The place bore its air of sanctity to the last. The Voltaireians of the district said, pleasantly, that little or nothing would be required to make the alteration;—that already there were players, boxes, pit, histrionics of all sorts, taking money at the doors, and, above all, very bad acting. But the building itself seemed to offer protest; its gloomy porch, its peaked tympanum, rigid as a cocked-hat, its austere white walls, gaunt railings, and stiff flight of steps—these still asserted the old profession. When they

* See All the Year Round, New Series, vol. iv., p. 304.

came presently to break a door high up in the side wall, and run up a ladder-like stair outside, labelling it "Gallery," the incongruity was more glaring; the aspect of things was not improved when over the centre door they daubed, "Boxes," and over the right, "Pit." Grim Covenanters passing by shook their heads. Nothing would change the look of the building. A bright coat of paint all over, and a row of lamps flaring outside, only made the incompatibility complete.

The theatre was duly opened. Though absent at the time from Jericho, I felt deeply interested in the success of the experiment. As no accounts reached me of its success, I had some forebodings. After two months I returned, and went eagerly to see how the theatrical tree had taken root and flourished. The doors were open, with the old inviting look, as though a night service were about to commence. The bills, hung on the rails, were in their accustomed place, only with a Mr. Tinmouth substituted for Mr. Howlet. It was all lighted up as it had been before; but a row of flaring lamps on the crest of the portico imparted an air discordant with all sacred associations. A glance round made it plain that the architect had been unable to shake himself free from the influence of the genius loci. At every turn he must have felt the old associations obstructing, or, at least, diverting his almost sacrilegious enterprise. For the private boxes bulged out over the stage like circular pulpits, and when the manager appeared in one, and craned his neck out to have a good look at the state of the gallery, we almost felt as if we ought to make responses.

The decorations of the Jericho Theatre are rather of a homely cast, room paper garnished with bead mouldings, a ready style of ornament to be noticed even in more pretentious theatres. The house contained one gallery for boxes, another overhead for the unwashed; a row of hard benches below, by an almost Eastern shape of compliment, entitled the "Stalls." The number of private boxes was amazing, the flanks, as it were, of the house being set apart for the wealthy aristocracy, who preferred, at a moderate cost, to be secure of their haughty privacy. Disdaining the haughty privacy, and feeling secure of more entertainment in the open publicity of the box benches, I took my seat there and looked about me.

The audience was certainly limited, or, in theatrical phrase, the "kind patronage" was of the scantiest kind. Time was when the Reverend Mr. Howlet could fill every bench. Now there were about a dozen in the boxes, as many more in the pit, two in the stalls, and twenty in the gallery. Mr. Howlet would have smiled grimly, and talked of a judgment.

A careless eye, even, noted at once some proceedings which gave a family air to the personnel of the establishment. A little boy of six years old took the tickets, and sold play-bills and oranges. A portly woman came frequently from behind a mysterious curtain, which seemed to lead into a stage box, but in reality led by windings to the stage, and patted the urchin with a maternal air, while various young ladies, scattered over the seats, looked on with an obsequiously affectionate air, as though dependent on the matron in some way. Later on, in the private box, a vision of a nurse was apparent, with a baby, who was always being shown the stage and actors as a sort of lullaby, or dramatic Daffy's Elixir.

In the orchestra a harp and violin did all the work between them; with much energy, and with never flagging spirit. Without music, too! as to put to shame those pretentious and crowded enclosures which the greater theatres affect. It stopped just as we entered and secured a central seat, while the curtain rose on act the third of Leah, the Jewess, with Miss St. Lucy in "Miss Bateman's world-wide impersonation." Here were to be noted some novelties. Miss St. Lucy was respectable, and did her part accurately and inoffensively, but every one about her —the notorious villain, peasants, &c.—indulged in a sort of dramatic franc-tireurship, coming on and going off as it suited them, and exhibiting powers of extempore composition which would have excited the envy of many a public orator. The dressing of the characters showed fertile resources in the management, and a happy ingenuity in turning present advantages to account. Thus "a villain" of any county or degree had merely to tuck up his trousers inside his wellington boots, tie a shawl round his waist, bare his throat, and there he was! A governor (in a serious part, not in a farce, where he was dressed as "governors" of the present day are) got his frock-coat edged with a yard of tinsel, submitted his cap to the same treatment, tied a sash of blue calico round his waist, and there *he* was! In these days of "fashioning soldiers out of your raw material," with co-existing

difficulties as to uniforming Mobiles, a few moments' consultation between the stage-manager of the Jericho Theatre and the government at Tours would, I am convinced, have solved that most perplexing question. Our energetic official can mould an ordinary "Jerry" hat into any required shape in the twinkling of an eye. A few pins are all that is needed to produce a tricornered, or cocked-hat. An ordinary coat buttoned tight, with a cross-belt, does all the rest.

The scenery was scarcely more ambitious. But, after all, a little reflection shows us that every incident of human life must take place either inside or outside a house, either indoors or under the canopy of heaven. A shrewd manager will here seize on this principle, and skilfully apply it. Thus at the Jericho Theatre we are not bewildered with elaborate and tedious "set scenes," as I believe they are called. But we alternate between an interior, whose walls are so happily indefinite in their decoration, that the most critical builder or upholsterer might be defied to decide whether it was the cabin or the cot which was before him. It did equally for the dungeon wall, the drawing-room associated with bloated luxury, or the tyrant's chamber. The hues were undecided, being neither gay nor grey, but a kind of a deep "no-colour," as Mr. Carlyle would phrase it, which did happily for anything. So with the out-door presentment, which was neither street, nor trees, nor green fields, but something so general as to pass for any of the three according to choice. But we cannot give the same cordial approbation to the fashion of shifting the scenes, which did not roll upwards in a slow graceful fashion, as if wound up, but were raised slowly in sudden jerks, as though men were dragging them up in handfuls, as it were. And this, indeed, I believe *was* the literal arrangement, saving rollers, &c., though involving a certain crookedness of motion, as the hands on one side showed more alacrity than the other. This system was revealed one night through the excessive slowness and languor of the motion, when the gentlemen in the gallery called impatiently on the operators by name, bidding them "get on."

When the tragedy was over, a little proclamation had to be made which would have delighted the heart of the Reverend Mr. Howlet, had he been—highly improbable as it was—present on the occasion. A gentleman came forward, whose appearance it was no undue harshness to call seedy, and gave us unwelcome news about what he called "the ballot" (pronouncing it like secret voting). "A most hunfort'net hincident 'ad hockerred, Miss Maringle was unable to appear in the ballot that night. It was no fault in the management. She could not appear through indisposition. Fortunately," he added, looking nervously at the wing, "there was one present who could prove that he was speaking the truth." This extraordinary diffidence and distrust of public confidence in his own veracity, seemed highly curious, and suggested the idea that the speaker had found the audience scornfully incredulous on former occasions, or that he had at least been proved publicly utterly untrustworthy, or perhaps had been exposed before pit, boxes, and gallery. All these solutions appeared consistent with his strange manner. "Mr. Kino," he went on, edging towards the wing, "would vouch for him. Mr. Kino, whom they all knew, the enterprising proprietor of the ballot, knew well that Miss Maringle could not appear that night."

On this he drew forward a stout, horsey-looking gentleman, who seemed very reluctant indeed to make his appearance. "Now, ladies and gentlemen, you will hear what Mr. Kino says," and he fixed his gaze nervously on the platter-like face of that spirited gentleman, who was uneasily consulting the crown of his hat. A nice diagnosis showed the true state of the case—pecuniary difficulties as to what is called "the ghost walking." Kino had determined to expose the whole thing, but when appealed to thus publicly, the common honour of the profession forbade exposure. The manager knew human character better than Kino did, counted on that loyal feeling, and not unprofitably. For Mr. Kino was heard to say:

"I am wery sorry, ladies and gentlemen, about the disappointment, but Miss Maringle really cannot appear."

"You hear, gentlemen and ladies," said the much relieved manager. "I knew Mr. Kino would corroborate me. He says he is sorry, and—I am sorry, and we are all sorry. The ballot will now proceed without Miss Maringle, trusting to your indulgence." And he pushed off Mr. Kino, though I could see that the latter was doubtful as to whether he had made enough of the occasion, or had asserted himself with sufficient dignity.

I went very often after this to the Jericho Theatre, which, at every recurring visit, seemed to be staggering downwards on the

broad road of decay. The management seemed to change about once every week; the audience to diminish steadily, and the proportion of "orders" to increase. So that the presence of a paying visitor in the boxes seemed to cause a rush of such officials as there were, to make sure that the bonâ fide shilling was not intercepted or stolen before it reached the management. The strength of the orchestra was reduced, and the harper now had it all to himself. It is conceded that things do not go on long in this fashion, but it was amazing how long the Jericho Theatre lingered. Suddenly the end came. I lately passed through the congenial slums in which the theatre had its seat, and found it encompassed by a great hoarding; huge scaffoldings were being carried in on men's shoulders. At last the crisis had come, or was it prosperity? Were they levelling it to the ground, as Mr. Howlet would apply the text, leaving not a stone upon a stone? What did it mean?

Why, this. It was a company, limited. It was to be touched by an enchanter's wand, and in a few weeks to emerge from its lowliness and rags to be an exquisite lady of fashion! Here was the solution. It is to be the Royal Boudoir Theatre; carriages of Mayfair and Belgravia are to crowd the approaches. What will the Reverend Mr. Howlet say to all this?

MADAM CROWL'S GHOST.

I'm an ald woman now; and I was but thirteen, my last birthday, the night I came to Applewale House. My aunt was the housekeeper there, and a sort o' one-horse carriage was down at Lexhoe to take me and my box up to Applewale.

I was a bit frightened by the time I got to Lexhoe, and when I saw the carriage and horse, I wished myself back again with my mother at Hazelden. I was crying when I got into the "shay"—that's what we used to call it—and old John Mulbery that drove it, and was a good-natured fellow, bought me a handful of apples at the Golden Lion, to cheer me up a bit; and he told me that there was a currant-cake, and tea, and pork-chops, waiting for me, all hot, in my aunt's room at the great house. It was a fine moonlight night, and I eat the apples, lookin' out o' the shay winda.

It is a shame for gentlemen to frighten a poor foolish child like I was. I sometimes think it might be tricks. There was two on 'em on the tap o' the coach beside me. And they began to question me after nightfall, when the moon rose, where I was going to. Well, I told them it was to wait on Dame Arabella Crowl, of Applewale House, near by Lexhoe.

"Ho, then," says one of them, "you'll not be long there!"

And I looked at him, as much as to say, "Why not?" for I had spoke out when I told them where I was goin', as if 'twas something clever I hed to say.

"Because," says he—"and don't you for your life tell no one, only watch her and see—she's possessed by the devil, and more an half a ghost. Have you got a Bible?"

"Yes, sir," says I. For my mother put my little Bible in my box, and I knew it was there: and by the same token, though the print's too small for my ald eyes, I have it in my press to this hour.

As I looked up at him, saying "Yes, sir," I thought I saw him winkin' at his friend; but I could not be sure.

"Well," says he, "be sure you put it under your bolster every night, it will keep the ald girl's claws aff ye."

And I got such a fright when he said that, you wouldn't fancy! And I'd a liked to ask him a lot about the ald lady, but I was too shy, and he and his friend began talkin' together about their own consarns, and dowly enough I got down, as I told ye, at Lexhoe. My heart sank as I drove into the dark avenue. The trees stands very thick and big, as ald as the ald house almost, and four people, with their arms out and finger-tips touchin', barely girds round some of them.

Well, my neck was stretched out o' the winda, looking for the first view o' the great house; and, all at once we pulled up in front of it.

A great white-and-black house it is, wi' great black beams across and right up it, and gables lookin' out, as white as a sheet, to the moon, and the shadows o' the trees, two or three up and down upon the front, you could count the leaves on them, and all the little diamond-shaped winda-panes, glimmering on the great hall winda, and great shutters, in the old fashion, hinged on the wall outside, boulted across all the rest o' the windas in front, for there was but three or four servants, and the old lady in the house, and most o' t'rooms was locked up.

My heart was in my mouth when I sid the journey was over, and this, the great house afoore me, and I sa near my aunt that I never sid till noo, and Dame Crowl,

that I was come to wait upon, and was afeard on already.

My aunt kissed me in the hall, and brought me to her room. She was tall and thin, wi' a pale face and black eyes, and long thin hands wi' black mittins on. She was past fifty, and her word was short; but her word was law. I hev no complaints to make of her; but she was a hard woman, and I think she would hev bin kinder to me if I had bin her sister's child in place of her brother's. But all that's o' no consequence noo.

The squire—his name was Mr. Chevenix Crowl, he was Dame Crowl's grandson—came down there, by way of seeing that the old lady was well treated, about twice or thrice in the year. I sid him but twice all the time I was at Applewale House.

I can't say but she was well taken care of, notwithstanding; but that was because my aunt and Meg Wyvern, that was her maid, had a conscience, and did their duty by her.

Mrs. Wyvern—Meg Wyvern my aunt called her to herself, and Mrs. Wyvern to me—was a fat, jolly lass of fifty, a good height and a good breadth, always good-humoured, and walked slow. She had fine wages, but she was a bit stingy, and kept all her fine clothes under lock and key, and wore, mostly, a twilled chocolate cotton, wi' red, and yellow, and green sprigs and balls on it, and it lasted wonderful.

She never gave me nout, not the vally o' a brass thimble, all the time I was there; but she was good-humoured, and always laughin', and she talked no end o' proas over her tea; and, seeing me sa sackless and dowly, she roused me up wi' her laughin' and stories; and I think I liked her better than my aunt—children is so taken wi' a bit o' fun or a story—though my aunt was very good to me, but a hard woman about some things, and silent always.

My aunt took me into her bed-chamber, that I might rest myself a bit while she was settin' the tea in her room. But first she patted me on the shouther, and said I was a tall lass o' my years, and had spired up well, and asked me if I could do plain work and stitchin'; and she looked in my face, and said I was like my father, her brother, that was dead and gone, and she hoped I was a better Christian, and wad na du a' that lids.

It was a hard sayin' the first time I set my foot in her room, I thought.

When I went into the next room, the housekeeper's room—very comfortable, yak all round—there was a fine fire blazin' away, wi' coal, and peat, and wood, all in a low together, and tea on the table, and hot cake, and smokin' meat; and there was Mrs. Wyvern, fat, jolly, and talkin' away, more in an hour than my aunt would in a year.

While I was still at my tea my aunt went up-stairs to see Madam Crowl.

"She's agone up to see that old Judith Squailes is awake," says Mrs. Wyvern. "Judith sits with Madam Crowl when me and Mrs. Shutters"—that was my aunt's name—"is away. She's a troublesome old lady. Ye'll hev to be sharp wi' her, or she'll be into the fire, or out o' t' winda. She goes on wires, she does, old though she be."

"How old, ma'am?" says I.

"Ninety-three her last birthday, and that's eight months gone," says she; and she laughed. "And don't be askin' questions about her before your aunt—mind, I tell ye; just take her as you find her, and that's all."

"And what's to be my business about her, please ma'am?" says I.

"About the old lady? Well," says she, "your aunt, Mrs. Shutters, will tell you that; but I suppose you'll hev to sit in the room with your work, and see she's at no mischief, and let her amuse herself with her things on the table, and get her her food or drink as she calls for it, and keep her out o' mischief, and ring the bell hard if she's troublesome."

"Is she deaf, ma'am?"

"No, nor blind," says she; "as sharp as a needle, but she's gone quite aupy, and can't remember nout rightly; and Jack the Giant Killer, or Goody Twoshoes will please her as well as the king's court, or the affairs of the nation."

"And what did the little girl go away for, ma'am, that went on Friday last? My aunt wrote to my mother she was to go."

"Yes; she's gone."

"What for?" says I again.

"She didn't answer Mrs. Shutters, I do suppose," says she. "I don't know. Don't be talkin'; your aunt can't abide a talkin' child."

"And please, ma'am, is the old lady well in health?" says I.

"It ain't no harm to ask that," says she. "She's torflin' a bit lately, but better this week past, and I dare say she'll last out her hundred years yet. Hish! Here's your aunt coming down the passage."

In comes my aunt, and begins talkin' to Mrs. Wyvern, and I, beginnin' to feel more comfortable and at home like, was walkin' about the room lookin' at this thing and at that. There was pretty old china things on the cupboard, and pictures again the wall; and there was a door open in the wainscot, and I sees a queer old leathern jacket, wi' straps and buckles to it, and sleeves as long as the bed-post hangin' up inside.

"What's that you're at, child?" says my aunt, sharp enough, turning about when I thought she least minded. "What's that in your hand?"

"This, ma'am?" says I, turning about with the leathern jacket. "I don't know what it is, ma'am."

Pale as she was, the red came up in her cheeks, and her eyes flashed wi' anger, and I think only she had half a dozen steps to take, between her and me, she'd a gov me a sizzup. But she did give me a shake by the shouther, and she plucked the thing out o' my hand, and says she, "While ever you stay here, don't ye meddle wi' nout that don't belong to ye," and she hung it up on the pin that was there, and shut the door wi' a bang and locked it fast.

Mrs. Wyvern was liftin' up her hands and laughin' all this time, quietly, in her chair, rolling herself a bit in it, as she used when she was kinkin'.

The tears was in my eyes, and she winked at my aunt, and says she, dryin' her own eyes that was wet wi' the laughin', "Tut, the child meant no harm — come here to me, child. It's only a pair o' crutches for lame ducks, and ask us no questions mind, and we'll tell ye no lies; and come here and sit down, and drink a mug o' beer before ye go to your bed."

My room, mind ye, was up-stairs, next to the old lady's, and Mrs. Wyvern's bed was near hers in her room, and I was to be ready at call, if need should be.

The old lady was in one of her tantrums that night and part of the day before. She used to take fits o' the sulks. Sometimes she would not let them dress her, and other times she would not let them take her clothes off. She was a great beauty, they said, in her day. But there was no one about Applewale that remembered her in her prime. And she was dreadful fond o' dress, and had thick silks, and stiff satins, and velvets, and laces, and all sorts, enough to set up seven shops at the least. All her dresses was old-fashioned and queer, but worth a fortune.

Well, I went to my bed. I lay for a while awake; for a' things was new to me; and I think the tea was in my nerves, too, for I wasn't used to it, except now and then on a holiday, or the like. And I heard Mrs. Wyvern talkin', and I listened with my hand to my ear; but I could not hear Mrs. Crowl, and I don't think she said a word.

There was great care took of her. The people at Applewale knew that when she died they would every one get the sack; and their situations was well paid and easy.

The doctor come twice a week to see the old lady, and you may be sure they all did as he bid them. One thing was the same every time; they were never to cross or frump her, any way, but to humour and please her in everything.

So she lay in her clothes all that night, and next day, not a word she said, and I was at my needlework all that day, in my own room, except when I went down to my dinner.

I would a liked to see the ald lady, and even to hear her speak. But she might as well a' bin in Lunnon a' the time for me.

When I had my dinner my aunt sent me out for a walk for an hour. I was glad when I came back, the trees was so big, and the place so dark and lonesome, and 'twas a cloudy day, and I cried a deal, thinkin' of home, while I was walkin' alone there. That evening, the candles bein' alight, I was sittin' in my room, and the door was open into Madam Crowl's chamber, where my aunt was. It was, then, for the first time I heard what I suppose was the ald lady talking.

It was a queer noise like, I couldn't well say which, a bird, or a beast, only it had a bleatin' sound in it, and was very small.

I pricked my ears to hear all I could. But I could not make out one word she said. And my aunt answered:

"The evil one can't hurt no one, ma'am, bout the Lord permits."

Then the same queer voice from the bed says something more that I couldn't make head nor tail on.

And my aunt med answer again: "Let them pull faces, ma'am, and say what they will; if the Lord be for us, who can be against us?"

I kept listenin' with my ear turned to the door, holdin' my breath, but not another word or sound came in from the room. In about twenty minutes, as I was sittin' by the table, lookin' at the pictures in the old Æsop's Fables, I was aware o'

something moving at the door, and lookin' up I sid my aunt's face lookin' in at the door, and her hand raised.

"Hish!" says she, very soft, and comes over to me on tiptoe, and she says in a whisper: "Thank God, she's asleep at last, and don't ye make no noise till I come back, for I'm goin' down to take my cup o' tea, and I'll be back i' noo—me and Mrs. Wyvern, and she'll be sleepin' in the room, and you can run down when we come up, and Judith will gie ye yaur supper in my room."

And with that away she goes.

I kep' looking at the picture-book, as before, listenin' every noo and then, but there was no sound, not a breath, that I could hear; an' I began whisperin' to the pictures and talkin' to myself to keep my heart up, for I was growin' feared in that big room.

And at last up I got, and began walkin' about the room, lookin' at this and peepin' at that, to amuse my mind, ye'll understand. And at last what sud I do but peeps into Madame Crowl's bed-chamber.

A grand chamber it was, wi' a great four-poster, wi' flowered silk curtains as tall as the ceilin', and foldin' down on the floor, and drawn close all round. There was a lookin'-glass, the biggest I ever sid before, and the room was a blaze o' light. I counted twenty-two wax-candles, all alight. Such was her fancy, and no one dared say her nay.

I listened at the door, and gaped and wondered all round. When I heard there was not a breath, and did not see so much as a stir in the curtains, I took heart, and I walked into the room on tiptoe, and looked round again. Then I takes a keek at myself in the big glass; and at last it came in my head, "Why couldn't I ha' a keek at the ald lady herself in the bed?"

Ye'd think me a fule if ye knew half how I longed to see Dame Crowl, and I thought to myself if I didn't peep now I might wait many a day before I got so gude a chance again.

Well, my dear, I came to the side o' the bed, the curtains bein' close, and my heart a'most failed me. But I took courage, and I slips my finger in between the thick curtains, and then my hand. So I waits a bit, but all was still as death. So, softly, softly I draws the curtain, and there, sure enough, I sid before me, stretched out like the painted lady on the tomb-stean in Lexhoe Church, the famous Dame Crowl, of Applewale House. There she was, dressed out. You never sid the like in they days. Satin and silk, and scarlet and green, and gold and pint lace; by Jen! 'twas a sight! A big powdered wig, half as high as herself, was a-top o' her head, and, wow!—was ever such wrinkles?—and her old baggy throat all powdered white, and her cheeks rouged, and mouse-skin eyebrows, that Mrs. Wyvern used to stick on, and there she lay grand and stark, wi' a pair o' clocked silk hose on, and heels to her shoon as tall as nine-pins. Lawk! But her nose was crooked and thin, and half the whites o' her eyes was open. She used to stand, dressed as she was, gigglin' and dribblin' before the lookin'-glass, wi' a fan in her hand, and a big nosegay in her bodice. Her wrinkled little hands was stretched down by her sides, and such long nails, all cut into points, I never sid in my days. Could it ever a bin the fashion for grit fowk to wear their finger-nails so?

Well, I think ye'd a-bin frightened yourself if ye'd a sid such a sight. I couldn't let go the curtain, nor move an inch, not take my eyes off her; my very heart stood still. And in an instant she opens her eyes, and up she sits, and spins herself round, and down wi' her, wi' a clack on her two tall heels on the floor, facin' me, ogglin' in my face wi' her two great glassy eyes, and a wicked simper wi' her old wrinkled lips, and lang fause teeth.

Well, a corpse is a natural thing; but this was the dreadfullest sight I ever sid. She had her fingers straight out pointin' at me, and her back was crooked, round again wi' age. Says she:

"Ye little limb! what for did ye say I killed the boy? I'll tickle ye till ye're stiff!"

If I'd a thought an instant, I'd a turned about and run. But I couldn't take my eyes off her, and I backed from her as soon as I could; and she came clatterin' after, like a thing on wires, with her fingers pointing to my throat, and she makin' all the time a sound with her tongue like zizz-zizz-zizz.

I kept backin' and backin' as quick as I could, and her fingers was only a few inches away from my throat, and I felt I'd lose my wits if she touched me.

I went back this way, right into the corner, and I gev a yellock, ye'd think saul and body was partin', and that minute my aunt, from the door, calls out wi' a blare, and the ald lady turns round on her, and I turns about, and ran through my room, and down the back stairs, as hard as my legs could carry me.

I cried hearty, I can tell you, when I got down to the housekeeper's room. Mrs. Wyvern laughed a deal when I told her what happened. But she changed her key when she heard the ald lady's words.

"Say them again," says she.

So I told her.

"Ye little limb! What for did ye say I killed the boy? I'll tickle ye till ye're stiff."

"And did ye say she killed a boy?" says she.

"Not I, ma'am," says I.

Judith was always up with me, after that, when the two elder women was away from her. I would a jumped out at winda, rather than stay alone in the same room wi' her.

It was about a week after, as well as I can remember, Mrs. Wyvern, one day when me and her was alone, told me a thing about Madam Crowl that I did not know before.

She being young, and a great beauty, full seventy year before, hed married Squire Crowl, of Applewale. But he was a widower, and had a son about nine year old.

There never was tale or tidings of this boy after one mornin'. No one could say where he went to. He was allowed too much liberty, and used to be off in the morning, one day, to the keeper's cottage, and breakfast wi' him, and away to the warren, and not home, mayhap, till evening, and another time down to the lake, and bathe there, and spend the day fishin' there, or paddlin' about in the boat. Well, no one could say what was gone wi' him; only this, that his hat was found by the lake, under a haathorn that grows thar to this day, and 'twas thought he was drowned bathin'. And the squire's son, by his second marriage, by this Madam Crowl that lived sa dreadful lang, came in for the estates. It was his son, the ald lady's grandson, Squire Chevenix Crowl, that owned the estates at the time I came to Applewale.

There was a deal o' talk lang before my aunt's time about it; and 'twas said the step-mother knew more than she was like to let out. And she managed her husband, the ald squire, wi' her whiteheft and flatteries. And as the boy was never seen more, in course of time the thing died out of fowks' minds.

I'm goin' to tell ye noo about what I sid wi' my own een.

I was not there six months, and it was winter time, when the ald lady took her last sickness.

The doctor was afeard she might a took a fit o' madness, as she did fifteen years befoore, and was buckled up, many a time, in a strait-waistcoat, which was the very leathern jerkin I sid in the closet, off my aunt's room.

Well, she didn't. She pined, and windered, and went off, torflin', torflin', quiet enough, till a day or two before her flittin', and then she took to rabblin', and sometimes skirlin' in the bed, ye'd think a robber had a knife to her throat, and she used to work out o' the bed, and not being strong enough, then, to walk or stand, she'd fall on the flure, wi' her ald wizened hands stretched before her face, and skirlin' still for mercy.

Ye may guess I didn't go into the room, and I used to be shiverin' in my bed wi' fear, at her skirlin' and scrafflin' on the flure, and blarin' out words that id make your skin turn blue.

My aunt, and Mrs. Wyvern, and Judith Squailes, and a woman from Lexhoe, was always about her. At last she took fits, and they wore her out.

T' sir was there, and prayed for her; but she was past praying with. I suppose it was right, but none could think there was much good in it, and sa at lang last she made her flittin', and a' was over, and old Dame Crowl was shrouded and coffined, and Squire Chevenix was wrote for. But he was away in France, and the delay was sa lang, that t' sir and doctor both agreed it would not du to keep her langer out o' her place, and no one cared but just them two, and my aunt and the rest o' us, from Applewale, to go to the buryin'. So the old lady of Applewale was laid in the vault under Lexhoe Church; and we lived up at the great house till such time as the squire should come to tell his will about us, and pay off such as he chose to discharge.

I was put into another room, two doors away from what was Dame Crowl's chamber, after her death, and this thing happened the night before Squire Chevenix came to Applewale.

The room I was in now was a large square chamber, covered wi' yak pannels, but unfurnished except for my bed, which had no curtains to it, and a chair and a table, or so, that looked nothing at all in such a big room. And the big looking-glass, that the old lady used to keek into and admire herself from head to heel, now that there was na mair o' that wark, was

put out of the way, and stood against the wall in my room, for there was shiftin' o' many things in her chambers ye may suppose, when she came to be coffined.

The news had come that day that the squire was to be down next morning at Applewale; and not sorry was I, for I thought I was sure to be sent home again to my mother. And right glad was I, and I was thinkin' of a' at hame, and my sister Janet, and the kitten and the pymag, and Trimmer the tike, and all the rest, and I got sa fidgetty, I couldn't sleep, and the clock struck twelve, and me wide awake, and the room as dark as pick. My back was turned to the door, and my eyes toward the wall opposite.

Well, it could na be a full quarter past twelve, when I sees a lightin' on the wall befoore me, as if something took fire behind, and the shadas o' the bed, and the chair, and my gown, that was hangin' from the wall, was dancin' up and down on the ceilin' beams and the yak pannels; and I turns my head ower my shouther quick, thinkin' something must a gone a' fire.

And what sud I see, by Jen! but the likeness o' the ald beldame, bedizened out in her satins and velvets, on her dead body, simperin', wi' her eyes as wide as saucers, and her face like the fiend himself. 'Twas a red light that rose about her in a fuffin low, as if her dress round her feet was blazin'. She was drivin' on right for me, wi' her ald shrivelled hands crooked as if she was goin' to claw me. I could not stir, but she passed me straight by, wi' a blast o' cald air, and I sid her, at the wall, in the alcove as my aunt used to call it, which was a recess where the state bed used to stand in ald times, wi' a door open wide, and her hands gropin' in at somethin' was there. I never sid that door befoore. And she turned round to me, like a thing on a pivot, flyrin', and all at once the room was dark, and I standin' at the far side o' the bed; I don't know how I got there, and I found my tongue at last, and if I did na blare a yellock, rennin' down the gallery and almost pulled Mrs. Wyvern's door off t' hooks, and frighted her half out o' her wits.

Ye may guess I did na sleep that night; and wi' the first light, down wi' me to my aunt, as fast as my two legs cud carry me.

Well, my aunt did na frump or flite me, as I thought she would, but she held me by the hand, and looked hard in my face all the time. And she telt me not to be feared; and says she:

"Hed the appearance a key in its hand?"

"Yes," says I, bringin' it to mind, "a big key in a queer brass handle."

"Stop a bit," says she, lettin' go ma hand, and openin' the cupboard-door. "Was it like this?" says she, takin' one out in her fingers, and showing it to me, with a dark look in my face.

"That was it," says I, quick enough.

"Are ye sure?" she says, turnin' it round.

"Sart," says I, and I felt like I was gain' to faint when I sid it.

"Well, that will do, child," says she, saftly thinkin', and she locked it up again.

"The squire himself will be here to-day, before twelve o'clock, and ye must tell him all about it," says she, thinkin', "and I suppose I'll be leavin' soon, and so the best thing for the present is, that ye should go home this afternoon, and I'll look out another place for you when I can."

Fain was I, ye may guess, at that word.

My aunt packed up my things for me, and the three pounds that was due to me, to bring home, and Squire Crowl himself came down to Applewale that day, a handsome man, about thirty years ald. It was the second time I sid him. But this was the first time he spoke to me.

My aunt talked wi' him in the housekeeper's room, and I don't know what they said. I was a bit feared on the squire, he bein' a great gentleman down in Lexhoe, and I darn't go near till I was called. And says he, smilin':

"What's a' this ye a sen, child? it mun be a dream, for ye know there na sic a thing as a bo or a freet in a' the world. But whatever it was, ma little maid, sit ye down and tell us all about it from first to last."

Well, so soon as I med an end, he thought a bit, and says he to my aunt:

"I mind the place well. In old Sir Olivur's time lame Wyndel told me there was a door in that recess, to the left, where the lassie dreamed she saw my grandmother open it. He was past eighty when he telt me that, and I but a boy. It's twenty year sen. The plate and jewels used to be kept there, long ago, before the iron closet was made in the arras chamber, and he told me the key had a brass handle, and this ye say was found in the bottom o' the kist where she kept her old fans. Now, would not it be a queer thing if we found some spoons or diamonds forgot there? Ye mun come up wi' us, lassie, and point to the very spot."

Loth was I, and my heart in my mouth, and fast I held by my aunt's hand as I stept into that awsome room, and showed them both how she came and passed me by, and the spot where she stood, and where the door seemed to open.

There was an ald empty press against the wall then, and shoving it aside, sure enough there was the tracing of a door in the wainscot, and a keyhole stopped with wood, and planed across as smooth as the rest, and the joining of the door all stopped wi' putty the colour o' yak, and, but for the hinges that showed a bit when the press was shoved aside, ye would not consayt there was a door there at all.

"Ha!" says he, wi' a queer smile, "this looks like it."

It took some minutes wi' a small chisel and hammer to pick the bit o' wood out o' the keyhole. The key fitted, sure enough, and, wi' a strang twist and a lang skreeak, the boult went back and he pulled the door open.

There was another door inside, stranger than the first, but the lacks was gone, and it opened easy. Inside was a narrow floor and walls and vault o' brick; we could not see what was in it, for 'twas dark as pick.

When my aunt had lighted the candle the squire held it up and stept in.

My aunt stood on tiptoe tryin' to look over his shouther, and I did na see nout.

"Ha! ha!" says the squire, steppin' backward. "What's that? Gi' ma the poker—quick!" says he to my aunt. And as she went to the hearth I peeps beside his arm, and I sid squat down in the far corner a monkey or a flayin' on the chest, or else the maist shrivelled up, wizzened ald wife that ever was sen on yearth.

"By Jen!" says my aunt, as, puttin' the poker in his hand, she kecked by his shouther, and sid the ill-favoured thing, "hae a care, sir, what ye're doin'. Back wi' ye, and shut to the door!"

But in place o' that he steps in saftly, wi' the poker pointed like a swoord, and he gies it a poke, and down it a' tumbles together, head and a', in a heap o' bayans and dust, little meyar an' a hatful.

'Twas the bayans o' a child; a' the rest went to dust at a touch. They said nout for a while, but he turns round the skull as it lay on the floor.

Young as I was I consayted I knew well enough what they was thinkin' on.

"A dead cat!" says he, pushin' back and blowin' out the can'le, and shuttin' to the door. "We'll come back, you and me, Mrs. Shutters, and look on the shelves by-and-bye. I've other matters first to speak to ye about; and this little girl's goin' hame, ye say. She has her wages, and I mun mak' her a present," says he, pattin' my shouther wi' his hand.

And he did gimma a goud pound, and I went aff to Lexhoe about an hour after, and sa hame by the stage-coach, and fain was I to be at hame again; and I niver saa lad Dame Crowl o' Applewale, God be thanked, either in appearance or in dream, at-efter. But when I was grown to be a woman my aunt spent a day and night wi' me at Littleham, and she telt me there was na doubt it was the poor little boy that was missing sa lang sen that was shut up to die thar in the dark by that wicked beldame, whar his skirls, or his prayers, or his thumpin' cud na be heard, and his hat was left by the water's edge, whoever did it, to mak' belief he was drowned. The clothes, at the first touch, a' ran into a snuff o' dust in the cell whar the bayans was found. But there was a handful o' jet buttons, and a knife with a green handle, together wi' a couple o' pennies the poor little fella had in his pocket, I suppose, when he was decoyed in thar, and sid his last o' the light. And there was, amang the squire's papers, a copy o' the notice that was prented after he was lost, when the ald squire thought he might 'a run away, or bin took by gipsies, and it said he had a green-hefted knife wi' him, and that his buttons were o' cut jet. Sa that is a' I hev to say consarnin' ald Dame Crowl, o' Applewale House.

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THE DOCTOR'S MIXTURE.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER XXVI. ONE CONSPIRATOR BAFFLED.

THE very next morning, almost before he had done shaving, the sound of wheels was heard, and Lord Shipton's old carriage was at the gate. Out jumped my lord, in an ancient white hat, with "a rag of crape" round it, meant as mourning for some one —or possibly to hide stains or damages.

"Down comes *his* bunting," cried the Doctor, flourishing the razor. "You scurvy old haberdasher, I'll have it out of you yet!"

He kept his lordship waiting a long time, then came out. His lordship ran up and caught at the Doctor's hand. "My dear Findlater, I have not lost a moment. You have set yourself right before me, at least, by the bold, manly, open stand you have taken. I said to them all: 'That's convincing; it's conscious innocence!'"

Our friend looked at him with a half-contemptuous, half-amused air.

"Ah," he said, "you don't cut a handsome figure, my Lord Shipton. You're now more in keeping with that old hood of yours outside. But, however, the matter is out of my jurisdiction; it's all O'Reardon's. I've given him the cart blanch. Oh, you'd better write him a note about it in black and white."

"My dear Fin, between friends——"

"It's *not* between friends," said the Doctor, fiercely, "and my dear Fin isn't for you. I've my back to the wall, my Lord Shipton, and mean to strike out at such mean curs as Ridley and his gang. As for you, you've not disappointed me, nor have I been taken back at your behaviour. It's neither more nor less than what was expected of you."

"Time will set me right with you, I have no doubt."

"Some of the party will be set right with me, my dear lord, never fear. My friend O'Reardon will look after that. But now isn't it a pity you're such a Paddy-go-over-the-bridge?"

"Ah, ah! very droll. Always humourous. But how?"

"Why, when it was giving way under him, he couldn't make up his mind to go back or forward, and so it broke in two, and he went down—a sort of little par'ble, or a-polly-ogue."

Lord Shipton could take nothing by his visit. In vain he came at last to apologising abjectly; he had such terror of losing any money at law. He disowned his associates. He had been drawn into it, &c. All the Doctor would reply was: "Commit your thoughts to paper, if you have any wish to communicate further."

With a very rueful and yellow face, the stingy lord climbed up into his old vehicle, and drove away. He was terribly afraid of the Doctor and his schemes. Besides, the man had no sense of restraint, and would stick at nothing. But, on the other hand, Ridley was always hurrying everything on in such a way, and dragging other people after him! And as soon as he got home he sat down and wrote a letter to Doctor Findlater, which that gentleman might well call "almost too satisfactory."

MY DEAR FINDLATER,—Through a misconception my name has been mentioned to you as associated with certain proceedings set on foot by the Honourable Mr. Ridley. I am particularly anxious that you should not imagine that I have any part in this

matter, nor do I believe any of the absurd rumours that have been going about. Your character, my dear Findlater, is too well established to be affected by such things, and has no greater admirer than myself.

Yours,
SHIPTON.

The Doctor laughed as he read, and then with a light heart went up to see how matters were going on at Leadersfort.

Here was the owner of Leadersfort, newly promoted to wealth and power, and likely to receive the honours of title, lying like some poor pauper, prostrate, miserable, and virtually abandoned, with the consciousness of this cruel struggle going on about his sick-bed. Greedy, interested faces, fussing and suggesting; and under the conventional phrases of affection, "Now dear," "Don't excite yourself, love!" he felt there were concealed ruder and rougher ends, and an eager, interested longing for him to do some act which would suit his tormentors. The richest and most powerful find themselves in this dismal press-room, waiting for the great executioner to come to do his office, and so the unhappy lord of Leadersfort found himself laid there suffering great pain and cloudiness of sense. Nor was he allowed peace or rest from importunities. This morning entered suddenly his wife and her brother, with the news of the Doctor's coming disgrace. Of his wife's brother Mr. Leader had always a sort of awe and alarm; that cold voice and colder gaze making him cower and shrink. Now, when he was shaken and helpless, it had double the effect on him.

"It's only right that you should know it," said Mr. Morrison. "It is what sister and I have said all along. As it is, our family will be disgraced for ever." Then he proceeded to relate all that had been made public, with a chilling minuteness, certainly not softening it, while the patient listened half scared.

"It's bad enough as it is," said Mrs. Leader; "but it would be terrible if this wretch acquired a footing here, and, after being driven out of decent society, found a refuge in this house, and made that unfortunate Cecil his victim."

"But she—she has done nothing. Why should that poor girl be punished? I can't be expected to treat her in that way."

Mrs. Leader laughed scornfully. "Done nothing? Isn't she devoted to him—bound up with him in everything? Was she not engaged to a fellow of her own standing, and didn't she give him up for what seemed a far better venture? No, no; they are all the same. They would strip you as you lie sick there, and as they have stripped others; and, were we not here, would reduce you to a poor, helpless, impoverished creature."

So the pair continued. Alone with her husband, Mrs. Leader continued to harp on the same string. "The result of this investigation may actually bring in the police on us; a terrible disgrace for a good family like ours. Will nothing," she added, impatiently, "rouse you from this infatuation, and let us not all be made the prey of this scheming family, who are now to be exposed at last?"

At this moment entered Katey, who heard these last words.

"Scheming family to be exposed!" she exclaimed, in a low, deeply-wounded voice. "Always that cry. For shame! Not even at this bedside can I restrain you."

"Ah! But it is true this time. It cannot be glossed over now. This is no rumour. It has all been discovered—your, and your father's, disreputable life. With such crimes against you how dare you introduce yourself into an honest family!"

Katey was aghast. Though she believed heartily in her father, and though the worst she could have accepted about him was indiscretion, or some wild freak, still there was something so exulting and so distinct about this charge that she trembled. The clouded eyes of Mr. Leader were turned to her.

"I can trust no one," he said, querulously. "You and yours have brought disgrace upon our family."

"What have I—what have we done?"

"You will know by-and-bye," said Mrs. Leader, exulting. "The people of the place have taken it up. They have tracked that man from place to place; all his frauds have been discovered; and they have the proofs here. Yes; you may well turn pale! The time has come when even Mr. Leader gives you up."

"If this be true!" said he. "Oh, it was shameful to have deceived us, to have forced yourself into our family, and to disgrace it. Go away. Don't speak to me; you worry me!"

"But it will be cleared up; I know it will. All his life we have been exposed to accusations of this sort, and they have been triumphantly refuted—always."

"If these can be disposed of you will all be very clever indeed. This time you

will hardly clear him. There is chapter and verse for everything."

"I can see," said Katey, with a trembling voice; "this is a new attempt. I know whence it comes, and implore of you, dear sir, not to listen; to wait, at least, until we know of what we are accused."

"Take her away; don't let her harass me. You are all worrying me to death with your disputes and bickerings. Take her away, and let me rest."

"You hear?" said Mrs. Leader.

Katey drew herself up, and, looking at her steadily, left the room. She had long had a presentiment that some such crash as this would arrive; for she suspected that the ways of her father had not always been across smooth, well-mown lawns. But that he had done anything criminal, or even unworthy of "the blood of the Findlaters," was an idea that never even occurred to her.

Her father now arrived, jubilant, triumphant, after his successful "sortie," as he called it, and was first met by Katey, all in tears, and yet with a scornful, defiant expression on her lips.

"Oh, Peter, Peter! they have been slandering us again"—she was too delicate to say you—"and they have persuaded him of the truth of these stories."

"Oh! is that all?" said the Doctor, smiling. "Oh, we'll soon set that to rights. No duck's back had ever the same capacity that Peter's has, in letting calumnies slide off it. Where's the great lady?"

The great lady was coming down; the rustle of her dress was heard, and she stood before him.

"You still show yourself here, I see. I think you ought in delicacy to stay away, with those charges hanging over your head. It is hard that our house should be the one exposed to this intrusion while all the others are shut against you."

"Oh! how cruel; how base!" cried Katey, "to insult my father in this way."

"Hush, Katey; let the lady finish. All in good time."

"Oh, understand me," went on Mrs. Leader, calmly. "I don't wish to raise any discussion, or to make any opposition to your proceedings. You have forced your way in here, and have made good your ground. I was speaking of what might be expected from a person of ordinary feeling. You are at liberty to go up and see how Mr. Leader will receive you."

The Doctor made no reply, and Mrs. Leader swept from the room. The Doctor smiled comically.

"She says what is true, Peter," said his daughter, earnestly. "He is turned against us too, and, I know, will not see or speak to you."

"Ah, poor old man! We'll see about that." And presently Doctor Findlater went up leisurely, with his daughter.

Mrs. Leader met him at the door. "You can go in," she said, "if you like."

The Doctor entered. He found no difficulty now with the obsequious Macfarlane.

"You had better not, I think," said the latter. "He has taken a strange turn against you; he says you have disgraced his family."

The Doctor, however, entered placidly with Katey.

"Don't come in here!" cried the sick man, impetuously. "I won't see you, or speak to you. Go away. Some one turn them away. I am harassed and worn to death with every one."

"My dear sir," began the Doctor, "I am innocent of all."

"I don't blame you or her. But I must have peace. Go away."

The Doctor retired. "My dear Katey," he said, in a grave and altered voice, "the poor fellow is going. He can't last long. I know that look in his face. I have seen it many and many a time. Where's this Macfarlane—— ?"

He went to consult with his brother professional, who agreed with him in his view, and urged that the London doctor should be sent for. This was told to Mrs. Leader, who, in great flutter and alarm, issued the necessary orders, and then went to confer with her brother. The Doctor then took his way home; and, as soon as he had cleared the precincts, his face changed, and sank inwards with a sort of gnawing dejection. "We're too near the wall," he said. "I declare my heart's broke with this up-and-down work. Woolsack o' th' Immortals! What will we do if the man dies; and there *is* death in his face!"

When the doctor arrived from town, and, after seeing his patient, came down to give his opinion, it was waited for with a nervous breathlessness that was truly genuine. Yet he would not travel out of his conventional phrases and forms. "We are not doing so well to-day. There is rather a change for the worse."

"But no danger?" said Katey; "no immediate danger?"

"No physician can decide those things off hand. Mrs. Leader, would you come into the study for a moment?"

There was something very impressive in his manner, which awed even that cold, selfish woman.

"Will you let me ask you, has Mr. Leader arranged his affairs?"

"N—no; far from it," said Mrs. Leader, in a low voice. "Why, do you think——?" And she stopped.

"That very soon the opportunity may pass by? Yes. There is really no time to be lost. He should be informed of his state at once."

"But," said she, almost faltering, "he is still collected, and able to——"

"Perfectly collected, but in another twenty-four hours he may be wandering. He is quite equal to arrange things now; but, as I say, another day, and the humours will mount to his brain. It is a pity that important matters should be left over to such a time, but it is always the way."

The doctor was leaving the room, when Mrs. Leader, who had remained overwhelmed by this news, called him back.

"He must be told this: who is to do it?"

"You, his wife; his clergyman; Mrs. Cecil perhaps best of all."

"Perhaps worst of all," said the lady, angrily. "We can't take such duties on us, nor can we be expected to do so. It is too painful and difficult a duty."

"Then ask that Doctor you have here. He is the very man."

This physician spoke to her with unconcern; as he afterwards said, he never met so cold and business-like "a second wife."

"Doctor Findlater—that low buffooning creature! You can't be serious, Doctor Speed. No, I would ask you to go up and break it to him. It is really your duty."

"Certainly. Our whole life is made up of duties nearly as painful."

He went up-stairs. Mrs. Leader followed softly, and hovered on the landing, not with any purpose of listening, but drawn to the spot by a sort of agitation and restlessness she could not master. The doctor entered quietly and stood beside the bedside. The sick man was tossing and groaning, as if in an uneasy dream. His face was literally of a bright mustard colour.

"You do not feel yourself better, then, my dear sir?"

"Oh, no! I don't think I shall ever get better."

"It is a very serious malady, or complication of maladies, from which you are suffering. It requires the strongest constitution to get through such a thing. Yours, my dear sir," added the doctor, slowly and meaningly, "is *not* strong."

The other raised himself, and looked fixedly at the physician.

"You don't mean——? But I shall be better when this crisis is over. You're not telling me there is danger?"

"As I said the other day, there is danger in a cold. But, my dear friend, it would be only the act of a prudent man to arrange your affairs."

"Yes, that is the cry I have been hearing all this time. I get no peace. Oh! it is cruel all this. If they had left me in my old position, I should have been healthy and strong now. I have had no peace or pleasure since I came into this wealth. And between them all I am reduced to this pass."

"My dear sir, don't worry yourself. These sort of maladies take all kinds of turns. I am only advising you to a measure of prudence, just to settle your affairs: it will not take five minutes, and it is surprising how much will be off your mind. I declare I advise thus for your good."

Mr. Leader looked at him wistfully. "I believe you, indeed," he said. "But, five minutes! You don't know what confusion and worry this will lead to. One set wanting me to leave my estate this way, another that——"

"If I might say anything——"

"Yes, do," said the sick man, eagerly.

"It would seem a very simple and ordinary course. Your wife to have a provision, the estate to pass to your son and that amiable girl, his wife."

"They have disgraced me—displeased, defied me. I will not be made a cipher of."

The doctor unconsciously repeated the words, as he looked at the figure before him, lying sick almost to death. The other saw the look. Then came a sudden revulsion.

"I would wish to do what is right. God knows I would! But they will take advantage of my weakness. I will not be let to follow my conscience, and do what is right. I feel no such animosity to these people. It is the worry and struggle that is killing me, and they don't care."

The doctor soothed him. "There shall be no worry or harassing of you. Would you take my advice, send for your clergyman—purely as a matter of business——"

"Oh! I am not so bad as that," said the patient, relapsing into peevishness. "I shall send for the clergyman when there is need."

"At all events, do what you think right, and be afraid of no one."

Thus had Katey's strange sweetness and fascination gained her even this new friend.

CHAPTER XXVII. POLLY REBELS.

When the Doctor returned home that day, and went "down the town," as he called it, to have a "chat at the club," he met Captain Montague, between whom and the family a sort of coldness had set in. This gentleman saluted the Doctor in a very grave and even distant manner, which the Doctor, then very sensitive, at once set down to the effect of th' reports. "I must give this Jack a set down, and straighten his curled-up nose for him." He was saved, however, this painful operation, by the ready confidence of the officer, who turned back with him.

"I wanted to tell you," he said, "if you cared to know, that I have had nothing to do with these late attempts to injure you. You might like to know who are your friends, and who are not, so I wished to tell you that I don't believe a word of them."

The Doctor was a little touched by this testimony from so cold a man, and wrung his hand warmly. "Thanks for that speech," he said. "It's all jealousy. But to-morrow or next day it will be all cleared up; when I slap an action for libel at the parties concerned. But all in good time. By the way, I'm sorry we don't see so much of you of late. I am afraid Polly has been prancing too much with her tongue. I tell her she ought to have a severe bit between her pretty teeth."

"By the way, it was about Miss Polly I wished to speak to you—if you wouldn't be offended," said the captain, gravely.

The Doctor felt his heart "shoot up like a spring mattress" at these words. "Polly's turn at last," he said to himself, and through his brain rushed a number of conflicting thoughts: he must show his papers: make all clear: not good enough for the girl: yet it might be better to take the ball at the hop, instead of waiting. But he was presently set right.

"It is my duty to tell you that the matter has begun to be seriously remarked. Molyneux is a man of notorious character—a dangerous man, whom no young girl should be seen with. I would really recommend you to take care. I know you will take my caution in good part."

"'Deed, then, I will not, Captain Montague," the Doctor said, firing up, and irritated at the disappointment. "I think it's free—uncommon free. Why, it's reflecting on my child and her bringing up. God bless me, sir! what d'ye mean, sir?"

"Oh, if you take it that way, I shan't say a word more."

"But I do take it that way, and every way too! Slur'ing the char'cter of my daughter! I declare, sir—why, what d'ye go on—I call on you, sir, distinctly, for support of your insinuations."

Captain Montague was still very grave, and not in the least put off his balance by the Doctor's bluster.

"I have too great an interest in your family to let myself be offended by any expressions of yours. I merely tell you this: the man boasts of his influence, and hints at walks and appointments which I know are mere inventions. However, I have given my hint, and shall say no more."

There was another change in this volatile Doctor.

"Ah, my dear Montague, not one of us is up to Polly and her tricks. She's the most sportive, funnisome thing that ever stepped. I own I am not up to her yet. But we're behind the scenes, at home. She's just making a hare of the man. My dear Montague I take it as very friendly of your telling me, and if I was a little short with you——"

"Oh, you can be long or short, as you please," said the other, coldly; "of course within limits. And I dare say your view is the right one. Good-bye."

The Doctor "smiled him off," then grew grave and angry, and hurried home. "This is a pretty how d'ye do! The foolish, ridiculous chit! to be wasting her time and my capital on such a fellow. She hasn't just two grains of Katey's sense. I'll give her a good, sound blowing up. Why, she's no better than a slip of a foolish school-girl, and never thinks of the serious business of life. Never."

Poor Polly was not so accountable for that; she had had "no schooling," and it may be questioned whether the Doctor's instructions would have helped her to the knowledge of the serious business of life. The general reign of D.D., and the unrestricted "run of the house" for officers and gentlemen, the daily appearance at the band, the little visits to the barracks, in short, a restless and never flagging "setting one's cap" at every suitable object, without the least disguise—if this were the serious business of life, she was indeed accomplished. Alas, for poor Polly! She had the finest nature, full of a generous

spirit, but "no ballast." A strong, cold, severe, but just and affectionate soldier, would have been the man to educate her as a wife. "A cruel snaffle," as the Doctor would say, but only for a time. By-and-bye, when the Du Barrys shall have seen fresh quarters all over the kingdom, and the conversation at mess shall turn, as it often does, on the class of young ladies disrespectfully known as "hacks," that name will suggest our Polly's, and traits and stories, more false than true, will run up and down the table.

Entering the house, the Doctor shouted up-stairs for Polly to come down to him, but no one answered. This put him out, and getting his hat, he set off to look for her. A sort of presentiment struck him. He never returned from his visits to Leadersfort till late: perhaps the girl had reckoned on his being absent. Heaven knows! He went in next door, and asked for Captain Molyneux. He was out also; they said that he had gone up for a walk in the park. The Doctor set off in pursuit, taking long strides, and breathing hard.

There was a shady row of trees near a brook, and our Doctor, having ascended to the top of a gentle hill, which commanded a great range of view, very soon made out two figures standing under the trees, at the edge of the little stream. Doctor Findlater crept round, and, in skirmishing fashion, kept under shelter. As he drew nearer he saw indeed that it was his daughter Polly and the insidious Molyneux, who seemed to be saying things of deep interest or compliment. In a moment Doctor Findlater was beside them. Both started, and Polly gave a half-scream.

"This looks nice!" said the unexpected intruder. "'Pon my word it does." Then with sudden sternness: "Get home at once, girl; you're wanted there, and it's where you should be. Go!"

Polly flew away like a roe, whom the hunter's first barrel has barely missed. The Doctor watched her till she was out of hearing, then folding his arms across his chest, said:

"Now, sir!"

"Well, Doctor, what do you look so wicked for? It was only about a ball. You've scared that poor child out of her wits."

"I have just heard," said the Doctor, speaking very deliberately, "some anecdotes about you, sir; how you've been amusing your friends with boasts about my child. If true, it was a scandalous, ungentlemanly act. But I can hardly credit it. If I found the shadow of a stick of a shintilla of evidence to that effect, I'd make —*any* man rue the day he was born!" said the Doctor, making his conclusion general.

"Quite proper; but don't gesticulate so violently," said the other, laughing; "people will think we are going to fight a duel in this pretty meadow."

"To be sure, then. Just take a warning from me, Captain Molyneux. You've come to the wrong inn this time, d'ye mind. Your patronage won't be admitted. In plainer English, we're not going to furnish food for gossip for you. So now you're served with notice: and give me and mine a very wide berth in future."

"What big tragedy words you use," said the other, insolently. "No doubt they have gossip enough in this place to engross them at present."

"Yes. But you may not have heard that I am dealing with the gossipers; so take care I don't make you a party. But this is trifling—you've got a gentlemanly warning—and I never give a gentlemanly warning twice. Don't come across the path of the Findlaters again. The signalman has shown the red light; so it's your own fault if you're found on the line again. Good-bye!"

The Doctor retired "off," as he would on the stage, with the most good-humoured and engaging smile in the world, as "if he had been asking the man to dinner;" then strode away home, swearing to himself, as his custom was. In his own house again, he roared for Polly; and when she did not answer, drummed at her door. As he threatened to break it in, it was opened suddenly, and there stood the proud coquettish beauty, her cheeks reddened with mortification and anger, and her lips pouting, and warranting Sir Anthony Absolute's rapturous description of Miss Languish.

"You hussy!" said the Doctor, furiously; "how dare you disgrace me, and waste the precious time, *finnaking* with a fellow of that sort? I am ashamed of you —so I am!"

"And how dare you insult me before a gentleman of his sort? I *shall* go to the ball! I'm no child, I can tell you! It's I that have been disgraced!"

"Don't speak to me in that style! Your poor foolish brain is about as soft as the jam in that cupboard there. There's an imbecility about your movements. I'm ashamed of you! Look at Katey, what she has done!"

"Look at Katey! poor lost Katey! a fine spectacle to encourage me. I won't be sold into a fine family that, as Captain Molyneux says, despises us all. I'd sooner far have a *gentleman*—one that really loved and esteemed me——"

"Hold your tongue, you brazen thing! It's immor'l to hear you! I tell you what, let me catch you speaking a word to any blackguard like that again, and I'll have you locked in your room for a week!"

"I dare you, Peter! I dare you!" said the young girl, in great excitement; "use any of your brutality to me, and I'll find those that will protect me."

"Brutality! Why you're mad, or idiotic! How dare you attempt to 'bird' me in that way? By all the living busbies——"

"Yes, you're good at your low oaths, Peter; but they don't intimidate me."

"Just get in there till you're cool, or till I send some one with a pail of water to dash over your head," said he, dragging the key out of the inside of the lock, violently slamming, and then locking the door. "What in the name of all that's holy is this new devilry that's got into her!" He had not time to investigate this rather nice inquiry—a reflection which his own rough knowledge of the world would have helped. According to a phrase often used by him, that "running helter-skelter among the officers" was never known to improve a young woman. "What ball is she talking of?" he thought. But presently came a matter of serious importance. Colonel Bouchier cantered up on his great horse, and entered with enthusiasm.

"I have news for you, Fin, my boy—I saw the old woman this morning, and worked hard for you. Egad, sir, I made love to her for you. But I talked her over, and gave her something—which you will pay me, Fin, when you come into the Banshee—and she's off home again delighted."

"My dear colonel," said the Doctor, much moved, "I don't deserve this—indeed I don't. You are the truest and warmest friend; indeed——"

"Not at all. You'd do as much for me."

"No," said the Doctor, sadly, "I couldn't, unfortunately. I wish I could, from my soul. *I* haven't the mammon of iniquity."

"Hush! you would. And the best was, just as I went away, an attorney sort of fellow came in; and I suspect he was sent away."

"With a fine specimen of entomology in his ear," said the Doctor, smiling. "Well, Heaven be praised for giving me such good friends!"

"You're a good fellow yourself, Fin, and deserve luck."

BISMARCK.

Otto Edward Leopold von Bismarck Schœnhausen (the man of "blood and iron," as he is usually called by his unappeasable enemies the German Liberals, from a certain defiant speech of his in which he spoke of the proper way of dealing with the opponents of Prussia) was born on the 1st of April, 1815, at the place in Saxon Prussia from which his family derives its name. The Bismarck race, originally from the March of Brandenburg, in the heart of Prussia, has produced soldiers for centuries, and is probably a family of longer standing in Prussia than even that of the present king, the Hohenzollern being in the eyes of the prouder "Junkers" mere transplanted and parvenu "burgraves" of Nuremberg.

In Prussia, beyond any other part of Germany, feudalism still flourishes, and to render this bygone institution still more galling, there has been grafted upon it the military arrogance encouraged by Frederick the Great. Combine with these two causes of aggressive pride the uneasy self-assertion of a new nation, and you have, as the product, the modern Prussian nobleman in his officer's dress, with his insolent contempt for all who do not wear swords, or boast twenty quarterings on their coat-of-arms. Of this pride of class, profession, and nation, Count Bismarck is the very incarnation. It remains a problem for the future how far united Germany can become free under such a rule, or how civilisation and true progress can prosper and advance under such a minister.

Although the son of a chef-d'escadron, Count Bismarck's early ambitions were not towards the profession of his race. He served, however, as a matter of course, his obligatory year in the army, and having studied at Göttingen, Berlin, and Greifswald (where he fought, as his son says, some fifty duels), he became a lieutenant in the Landwehr; just sufficient training to enable him to comprehend in a general way most military operations. Aiming at an administrative career, Count Bismarck studied civil law. In 1841, as an avowed aristocrat of the extremest and most overbear-

ing and aggressive type, he became a member of the Diet of the province of Saxony, and, in 1847, of the General Diet, where he at once came to the front and defied the party of progress. An enemy to all change and freedom, Count Bismarck, at thirty-two, preached blind obedience, deference, and submission to the kaiser. His speeches were always antagonistic to the spirit of the age, and opposed any relaxation of the old fetters of absolute power. Thus, in 1847, he argued that all great cities should be swept from the face of the earth, because they were the centres of democracy, and what was called constitutionalism. He also told the Diet that the sacrifices of the war of 1815 had not given the Prussian people the right to claim a constitution, the monarchs of Prussia reigning not by the consent of the people, but by the grace of God, and that all the king chose to accord would be an act of spontaneous liberality. A political writer, not unfriendly to the man, has thus described his career of Conservative agitation from 1847 to 1851:

"He was the leader of the Conservative party, using that word in its most absolute and anti-sympathetic sense, the chief of the Extreme Right, the champion of all the privileges, interests, and pretensions of the feudal party, the defender of seignorial jurisdiction, the most obstinate antagonist of democracy and parliamentarism, the most zealous apologist of divine right and aristocratic immunities."

In a speech delivered in 1850, Count Bismarck declared boldly that the mission of Prussia was to subordinate herself to Austria, in order to fight by her side against German democracy; and, in the same speech, in his usual reckless and challenging way, he called the occupation of Schleswig-Holstein, "a stupid adventure," into which the miserable policy of 1848 (the revolutionary year) had drawn Prussia. He concluded by denying that Austria had ceased to be a German power because she happened to have the good fortune to have Sclavonians subject to her. "On the contrary altogether," he said, "I respect Austria as the representative of an ancient German power."

In 1848, during that fierce outbreak of oppressed and deceived men, when the insurgents of Berlin carried the dead bodies of their murdered brethren by torchlight past the king's balcony, Bismarck turned away in scorn and anger from politics; but he reappeared in 1849, and led the last charge on the defeated patriots of the national party, who still generously, but foolishly, trusted in the Prussian king and his respect for constitutional rights. Austria and Prussia had, after a sham quarrel, just contrived to help the Elector of Hesse against his oppressed subjects. Baron Manteuffel, the Prussian prime minister at Olmütz, made his nation pay an almost abject submission to Austria. At the Diet of Frankfort, Prussia, the rising rival of Austria, played the part of vassal. Count Bismarck was just the man for Manteuffel, and followed out to the letter his principles of subservience to the Hapsburgs. His convictions were known to be vehement, his mind was recognised as prompt, unflinching, and vigorous. The government wanted a partisan so clever, so unfaltering, so careless of money, no struggler for position, and his intellect once acknowledged, he soon took his diplomatic degree. In May, 1851, Bismarck was sent to the restored Diet of Frankfort, as first secretary of legation; and three months later was promoted to the rank of ambassador, in the place of Herr von Rochow. This post the count occupied for eight years, till the spring of 1859. During this time he sloughed off his old opinions, and suddenly turned an anti-Austrian of the extremest school. With the Austrian ambassador, afterwards the Austrian prime minister, Herr von Rechberg, Bismarck had ceaseless diplomatic contentions, which even culminated on one occasion, so the rumour went, in a physical collision, the result of which history however has not recorded.

The causes of this change are not known. Bismarck himself always attributes them to what he saw and heard of Austrian policy during a visit to that most mischievous friend of tyrants and despots, Prince Metternich, at his seat at Johannisberg. Perhaps, after all, we may honestly take the noblest and justest view of this change from Count Bismarck's own words, which are well worth quoting:

"Sixteen years ago," he says, "I was living as a country gentleman, when the king appointed me the envoy of Prussia at the Frankfort Diet. I had been brought up to admire—I might almost say to worship—Austrian policy. Much time, however, was not needed to dispel my youthful illusions in regard to Austria, and I became her declared opponent. The humiliation of my country, Germany sacrificed to the interests of a foreign nation, a crafty and perfidious tone of policy—

these were not things calculated to give me satisfaction. I did not know that the future would call upon me to take any important part in public affairs; but from that period I conceived the idea which, at the present day, I am still working out—the idea of withdrawing Germany from Austrian pressure; at any rate, that part of Germany whose tone of thought, religion, manners, and interests identify her destinies with those of Prussia. I speak of Northern Germany."

The real fact is, to use plainer language than Bismarck, even at his frankest, dare adopt, the young diplomatist, with his vigorous sagacity and fast-developing ambition, saw that the time had at last come to wrench the empire from Austria, whose policy had grown utterly effete and mistaken.

As Frederick the Great first saw that Prussia was strong enough to enlarge her frontiers and assert her power, so Bismarck was the first Prussian to see that the time had come for the Hohenzollern to displace the worn-out Hapsburgs. His Prussian ambition soon got the better of the ideal imperialism of his youth. Austrian arrogance, fresh from the triumph of Olmütz, roused the gall of the proud Prussian. Prince Schwartzenberg had been rash enough to say openly, in the drawing-room of the palace: "Il faut avaler la Prusse d'abord, pour ensuite la démolir." The lesser German princes derided "the smallest of the great powers," as Prussia was called, while Bismarck bit his lips, and revolved grim projects in his big turbulent brain, projects with bitter results to the mocking dukelings and princelings of the petty German states. The humiliation at Olmütz is said to have killed Count Brandenburg, the minister who carried the Berlin coup d'état in 1848; but it only roused the stronger nature of Bismarck, armed him, and made him inexorable in the inevitable conflict. Stirred by a new ambition, and seeing his opportunity, this daring and strong-willed man addressed himself to the task of raising Prussia, and depressing Austria for ever. In 1856, he stood up for the duchies against the empire. In 1858, he wrote against the Zollverein as far too republican, and advocated a customs parliament, in which Prussia might be more absolute.

At the commencement of the Italian war, German sentiment and old clanship all but dragged Prussia into an alliance with Austria. The prince regent (the present king) alarmed at the victory of Magenta, began to fear an invasion of French republican doctrine into his feudal dominion. He even went so far as to mobilise six corps d'armée (two hundred and fifty thousand men). Yet still, with his old ambition, he proposed to the Diet to place two other corps d'armée under his command. Austria, dreading Prussia's aggrandisement even more than French successes, instantly forbade this, told Prussia her duty was to take the field at Austria's side, and declared that she would not surrender even a Lombard village. This pride was crushed at Solferino, and the hasty treaty of Villafranca followed from Austria's fear of her home rival. An Austrian journal, indeed, publicly confessed that Austria would rather lose three Lombardies than afford Prussia an opportunity of extending her power in Germany. All this time Bismarck was away as ambassador at St. Petersburg. From that city he was constantly urging on Herr von Scheinitz, the minister of foreign affairs at Berlin, the necessity of breaking with the Diet, where all the wishes or wants of Prussia were stifled by the Austrian majority. He says in one letter, "The word on our flag should be Prussian not German. I should desire to see the former word on our flag, only when we have become united to our German fellow-countrymen in a closer and more effectual bond." He expressed much alarm at the meeting of the Austrian and Prussian sovereigns at Töplitz, when it was supposed Prussia had guaranteed her assistance if Venetia were attacked. He wanted proof of Austria's friendly disposition, and said in his rough, picturesque way: "One hand washes another; and when we have since seen the lather of the Austrian soap we will willingly return the service."

A year after this Bismarck met the king at Baden-Baden, explained his views, and at the king's wish set them down on paper. In his scheme the daring innovator boldly asserted the necessity of a firmer consolidation of the means of defence, more pliable customs, and a national representation which might be thoroughly Conservative, and yet win thanks from the Liberals. In October, 1861 (a month later), Bismarck again saw the king, and by the time of the subsequent coronation, when the Prussian king put the crown on his own head in child-like belief of the obsolete doctrine called divine right, the untiring statesman had elaborated his scheme of reform.

The new chambers were not tractable. They looked on the project for reorganising

the army as a mere step to the suppression of the Landwehr, and as only a means of increasing posts of honour and emolument for the sons of the nobility. The new army was, they thought, to be a nursery for more of those intolerable junkers. The budget was rejected, but the king, dismissing the ministers, replaced them with still more servile tools. At this crisis the king bethought him of Bismarck, his unflinching adviser, and invited him to enter the ministry; but the time was not ripe for the great Mephistopheles of modern Germany. He had once, in earlier days, lingered in Paris till a snubbing from his superiors, and an ominous whisper of "pas trop de zèle, monsieur," had hurried him back to his office in Russia; but the roads were all open now to the favoured man, who believed, or loudly pretended to believe, in divine right, and Bismarck chose the Paris embassy for himself. One summer he stayed in the French capital, a constant intimate of the emperor, as he was, later in the year, in still greater privacy and closeness at Biarritz, and even when in the autumn of that year (September, 1862) he was called to Berlin to conduct the ministry, he returned for a short time to Paris to take formal leave.

During the next three years and a half, this strong-willed man trod down the Liberal opposition, with arrogance and contempt. He dared not tell them his real reasons for maintaining a great army, and chafed by their resistance to his schemes, he did not trouble himself to conciliate them. He saw the king must either conquer or fall, and Bismarck resolved he should be victorious. The Liberals, not understanding his great views for Prussia, saw in him only a friend of the hero of the coup d'état, and a partisan of feudalism and large standing armies. The chambers were twice dissolved, a third time the deputies were contemptuously sent home, and Bismarck and his colleague, Herr von Roon, the minister of war, treating them with open scorn and defiance. On one occasion, when a speaker moved that the ministers should attend the sittings in order to hear the grave complaints that had been raised against them, Count Bismarck coolly stepped forth from an adjoining room, and said that the ministers' attendance was quite unnecessary, as what had been going on among the gentlemen could be heard well enough in the room where he had been sitting. Another time he told the deputies plainly that when ministers thought it necessary to make war they would do so with or without the deputies' consent. The minister of war also denied that he was amenable to the president's interruptions. Then came severe laws against the press, and a persecution of all resisting officials. Even the Crown Prince, objecting to the restrictions on the press, was obliged to remain from court, and deputies were prosecuted for attacking ministers in parliament. Bismarck was supreme. In fact, it was Charles the First and Strafford over again; but this time the plotting pair kept their heads firmly on, and won the game. There were provocations enough in what they did for a hundred revolutions.

Internal opposition being thus crushed out, Bismarck began to seek causes of quarrel with Austria. To Count Karolyi, the Austrian ambassador at Berlin, he boldly proclaimed his aspirations for Prussia. He complained that Austria refused her a proper position in the Bund, and planned coalitions against her. Austria seemed always to act, he said, as if Prussia could not resist attacks from without, unless aided by Austria. The audacious minister now, indeed, began to boldly claim for Prussia a right to preponderate in the internal affairs of Germany, and finally had the irritating audacity to put before the aghast Count Karolyi the alternative of Austria either transporting her political centre to Ofen, or of seeing Prussia in the ranks of her enemies, on the occasion of the first European war. Events were fast coming to a crisis, when, in November, 1863, the King of Denmark suddenly died, and matters took a new turn.

The war of Schleswig-Holstein furnished Bismarck with fresh opportunities to first fool, then humble, Austria. He first persuaded Austria to defy the Diet, oust the pretender, the Prince of Augustenburg, and occupy the duchies. The second campaign, ending with the invasion of Jutland, placed the duchies at the disposal of Austria and Prussia, the latter power eventually cuckooing its fellow-robber out of the whole. War between Prussia and Austria naturally followed. Bismarck loudly accused Austria of cherishing warlike designs against Prussia—a shameless accusation, which no one believed. He had already, in 1865, with deep instinct, said to the Bavarian minister: "One single encounter, one decisive battle, and Prussia will have it in her power to dictate conditions." At first it was thought impossible that Prussia would venture on such a fratricidal war. Gradually the Liberals

learnt to bear tranquilly the humiliation of the old empire, and to learn that here, at last, was a step towards a real and lasting German unity. The result was that short campaign ending in the crowning victory of Sadowa, and the proved superiority of Prussia. Bismarck, with his usual dexterous frankness, then appealed to the Liberals to withdraw their opposition for a time, and to think of German unity, and victory over Austria, alone. He could not do, he said, with less than five hundred thousand bayonets. He pleaded the difficulty of convincing a king opposed to modern ideas, and surrounded by ultra-aristocratic influences. The king could not forget the dangers and humiliations of 1848. He had been cruel against the Baden insurgents in 1849. Moreover, the king was averse to war with Austria. "I pass my life," said Bismarck, "acting as a buffer between the king and the Liberals." In 1867, the differences of Bismarck and his less progressive colleagues were proved by the dismissal of the minister of justice, for his unwise prosecutions of parliamentary speakers.

And now a word or two about Count Bismarck's personal characteristics. Newspaper correspondents have photographed him for us often enough, with his characteristic bluff, jovial manner, and his white cuirassier cap with the yellow band. His dress, like his policy, is somewhat defiant and reckless. A contempt for appearances is shown even in his hat and necktie. "Something about him," says M. Bamberger, one of his keenest French critics, "reminds one of that mixture of insolence and good humour—the German student—with his bumptious, pugnacious, jovial, and yet in the inmost recesses of his soul, somewhat sentimental nature." There is a good deal of crafty shrewdness and prompt dexterity in Count Bismarck's looks. A gleam of the sardonic and malign mars an apparent frankness. The features are strongly marked with good-nature and with firmness. The pouches under his eyes tell of a stormy youth, and of the Teutonic potations for which the astute minister was once renowned at students' feasts. That fair bald man with the bunchy moustache has the air of a nobleman and courtier, but there are still in him traces of that temper that galls his opponents, and which, in 1849, led the count to challenge the editor of the Kladderadatsch (the Berlin Punch), a paper to which he was afterwards supposed to contribute skits on the Austrian diplomates. Count Bismarck is no orator; but he rules his audience by the vigour of his thoughts. One of his admirers described him, in 1866, as having a clear and audible, but a dry, unsympathetic, and monotonous voice. He stops frequently and interrupts himself, sometimes even he stutters in his struggles for words to match his thoughts. His attitudes and gestures are awkward and uneasy. But as he warms he conquers one by one all these defects, attains greater lucidity and precision, and often rises to a well-delivered, vigorous—sometimes too vigorous—peroration. Latterly, power and success have given him confidence; his words still come fitfully and reluctantly, but there is a certain charm to the listener, in, as it were, seeing the forging of the speaker's thoughts; his slowness and earnestness give a greater weight to his speeches than rapid fluency could secure. "Sometimes," says M. Bamberger, "he presents his subject in sharp, happy touches, pressing into his service similes from real life with wonderful audacity, and in a cool, unprejudiced kind of way, overthrowing tenderly revered traditions by reference to stern realities. It should be added that his style, although very quiet, is not deficient in imagery. His bright and clear intellect does not despise colouring, any more than his strong constitution is free from nervous irritability." He talks like an ancient Roman, with infinite vigour and verve, and with epigrammatic picturesqueness. What could be more terrible, yet strong, than his avowed resolve to "let Paris stew in her own gravy?" How cleverly he retorted on Jules Favre, who had called Strasbourg "the key of the house," with the question, "Which house?" What could be more delicious than the quiet irony with which he described his conversation with the same gentleman? "We began by reviewing the characteristics of past ages." Here, for once, is a German bitterly practical. Bismarck's favourite boast that he has "set Germany on the saddle," is met by the bitter but natural question of a clever English Liberal, apropos of the infamous arrest of Dr. Jacoby, "but has he taught her to ride?" A remark attributed the other day by a correspondent to the count's secretary, evidently owes its origin to the astute chancellor of the German Confederation: "Whatever happens," he said, "we shall at least treat Paris with a bouquet or two of shells." Even in the Metz intrigue, a characteristic sentence at one of the back-stair interviews is attributed to Bismarck: "The empress remaining in

England, and showing no signs of life." What a leader-writer Bismarck would have been! Perhaps some day, a fugitive from *free* Germany, he may turn his hand to a fresh profession. One card this wily Machiavelian always carries ready, and that is "frankness." He has, by his own account, no secrets, no mental reservations. He will explain to you the circumstances which have made him seem a reactionist; he will tell you why he was so long unable to explain to the Liberals his motives for keeping a standing army. Still, somehow, this obtrusive frankness always reminds us of that empty drawer upon which the professional juggler always so insists, and in which he is never tired of rattling his wand.

To see Bismarck to perfection, they say, you should see him in parliamentary committees. There he is alternately winning and genial, reckless and defiant. He rattles on brilliantly and rapidly, sprinkling his conversation with many foreign words. He has infinite tact under the air of levity. Once, while ambassador at Frankfort, his special enemy, Herr von Rechberg, called a council of the members of the Diet at his house, and insolently received them in his dressing-gown. To pay him off in his own coin, Count Bismarck immediately drew his cigar-case out of his pocket, took a cigar, offered a second to his neighbour, and lighting his own, said with playful nonchalance: "You have no objection, dear count?"

This was the most complete and perfect rebuke he could have given. One day he drew an olive leaf from his cigar-case (he is a great smoker), and said to a member of the Liberal party:

"I picked that at Avignon to offer to the Opposition, but the moment has not yet come: I shall keep it for some future time."

He is always making these indirect overtures to the Liberals, either from sincerity, or because he dreads a reaction. At times he has uttered regrets. After Sadowa he told a friend, that the sight of the ghastly battle-field had robbed him for some days of all enjoyment of the triumph. Writing about the constant suspicions of his enemies, he once said: "The inquisitor is most stern to those on his own side, friends who have long drunk from the same cup are more unjust than enemies. and I pine for my house on the Quai Anglais (St. Petersburg), with its quieting outlook on the ice of the Neva." His impatience of all opposition has made Bismarck confess that he does not feel any aptitude for internal affairs, his reckless strength being unable to adapt itself to the restrictions of law and individual interests in a highly civilised community. Surely there is no other living statesman who dare tell his country, as Bismarck has cynically done, that it was perhaps too advanced to bear a constitution.

But Providence is stronger than Bismarck. France is struck down, but the love of liberty no sword can reach. Only the good this strong man has done will live. The march the half-million of Teutons has made, will only be to carry back to Germany a desire for wider liberty, and a hatred of dead feudalism. Bismarck may crush Paris, but he cannot stop the sun, or freeze the illimitable ocean. Great thoughts will spread in wider and wider circles till they inundate the old world, and as they rise those irresistible waters will some day make little of Count Bismarck and Frederick William, though they be girt with twice five hundred thousand bayonets.

The most interesting exposition of Count Bismarck's political creed was that published by M. Vibort, in the Siècle, in June, 1866. It was published, it is supposed, with the count's own permission, and no doubt paints him with reasonable fidelity: certainly as he then wished to appear to the French people, whose jealousy the victories of that wonderful Sadowa campaign soon began to rouse. Bismarck's alarming frankness overflowed in the whole interview. M. Vibort had been told that the Prussian minister was inaccessible, living retired in the recesses of his study, shut in with doubly-locked doors, only going out to see the king, and secluded even from his most intimate friends. Not many weeks before, Ferdinand Blind, a fanatical young Republican student, had fired five barrels of a revolver at him within a few paces, yet the minister's study-door was not even bolted. Bismarck instantly, with finished politeness, took M. Vibort's hand, led him to an arm-chair, and offered him a cigar. M. Vibort began boldly by expressing the French sympathy with the expulsion of Austria from Italy, and the establishment of united Germany; but he asked how Bismarck, while upholding the regenerative virtues of a national parliament, reconciled that doctrine with the despotic way in which he had treated the second chamber at Berlin. "France did not admit the possibility," said the interviewer, "of any intimate union between absolutism and democracy."

"A la bonne heure!" replied the frank statesman, "you go at once to the root of things. In France I know I am as un-

popular as in Germany. Everywhere I am considered responsible for a state of things that I have not created, but which has been forced upon me as upon every one else. I am the scapegoat of public opinion, but that does not much trouble me. I pursue the course which I believe to be beneficial to my country, and to Germany, with a perfectly easy conscience. As to the means, I have used those which were within my reach, in default of better. Germany is given up to the spirit of individualism. The sentiment of individualism, and the necessity for contradiction, are developed to an inconceivable degree in the German. Show him an open door, and rather than go through it, he will obstinately determine to force a passage through the wall at its side. No government, whatever it may do, will ever be popular in Prussia. People shouted at the victories of Frederick the Great, but they also rubbed their hands together at the thought of being delivered from their tyrant. Nevertheless, with all this antagonism, there coexists a deep attachment to the royal house. They all cry from the depth of their hearts, 'God save the King,' and they obey when the king commands."

M. Vibort suggested that discontent might one day grow into rebellion.

"The government," said the "interviewed" minister, "does not believe this is to be feared, and does not fear it. Our revolutionists are not formidable. They exhaust their hostility and invectives by attacking me. I have never acted otherwise, simply because I could not; with Austria opposed to us an army was imperatively necessary, and all the influences of birth and education led me to the side of the king, who clung to the idea of military organisation as firmly as to the crown, because he was convinced, heart and soul, of its indispensable necessity. No one could make him yield or vacillate. I entirely agree with his views. I am still working out the idea of withdrawing Germany from Austrian pressure devoting myself heart and soul to the idea of a Northern Germany under the ægis of Prussia. To attain this end, I would brave all dangers, exile—the scaffold itself. I said to the Crown Prince, whose education and natural tendencies incline him to the side of parliamentary government, 'What matter if they hang me, provided the rope by which I am hung bind this new Germany firmly to your throne?' In the conflict, I have remained by the king—my veneration for him, all my antecedents, all the traditions of my family, made this course my duty. But that I am either by nature or from principle an adversary of national representation—a born enemy of parliamentary governments—is a perfectly gratuitous supposition. Should the day come," concluded this remarkable man, "when, my task being accomplished, I shall find it impossible to reconcile my duties to the king with my duties to my country, I shall know how to blot myself out of political existence without denying the work I have done."

A correspondent of the Gaulois, who recently had a long interview with Bismarck, who was very confidential, but afterwards imprisoned his visitor at Mayence, has described the chancellor's lodgings at Versailles as mean—empty bottles served for candlesticks, and the table was covered with beer jugs and wine decanters. The wine, Bismarck was anxious to testify, was "all *paid* for."

THE SWING.

It stands, no beauty on the lawn,
Though beautiful to me,
The rugged, crooked, gnarled, stunted,
Blossoming apple-tree.
I love to see it rich with blooms
Or white with feathery snow,
Ripening thoughts as well as apples,
Out of the Long-Ago.

Twelve summers up the stream of Time;
It seems but yesterday;
I made a swing from its sturdiest bough,
In a morn of merry May.
And from it swung my love, my life,
In the flush of her sunny youth;
And I wooed her shyly, won her bravely,
With all her love and truth.

And now I swing another as fair,
She's nine years old, or ten,
And she laughs, and sings, and shouts, "Papa!
Swing me again! again!"
And I swing her again and kiss her.
"Don't kick at the stars!" I cry,
And she crackles with laughter, and says "I will,
If you'll swing me up as high!"

Gnarly, crooked, rugged, stunted,
Blossoming apple-bough!
I do not know in the wide, wide world
Another as fair as thou!
Three loves, three lives, three spirits of Hope,
Amid thy leaves are hidden,
And thy fruit is a fruit of Paradise,
Pleasant and unforbidden.

FOREIGN INVADERS.

If we have anything to be grateful for in this island home of ours, for the present at least, it is our freedom from foreign invasion. To us the desolating tramp of an inpouring, ruthless host is unknown, and we pass the years untremblingly, confident (over-confident it may be) in our security

from external attack. When we take up our Times at the breakfast-table, the last item of intelligence we expect to find is the news that the enemy has effected a landing, turned the heights of Dover, and strongly intrenched himself, preparatory to an advance on Canterbury. And, in addition, that two other corps have been equally successful in eluding our Channel fleet, and have secured a base of operations, the one in Mount's Bay and the other close by Harwich. We can watch the corn waving in rivulets of gold, as the gentle breeze sweeps over it, without a thought that alien requisitions will deprive us of the growing loaf. We have no fears of half a dozen Uhlans riding clatteringly to our porches, with a peremptory demand for quarters,and an intimation that a thousand or two will dine with us on the morrow. The October brewing in our cellars may sleep itself into invigorating strength, with no risk of Bavarian swillers to tap it into wakening. Even the cart-horses of the farm deport themselves sedately, with no dread of being yoked by foreign hands to a twelve-pounder or a mitrailleuse, or of being eaten by hungry warriors.

Pass through our smiling country; look at our manses and our villages, mingle with the peace-reared, ruddy population, and think of stern war striding in those homely tracks. Think of fields of corn, and twining hop-gardens, being ridden down and trampled by thousands of invading soldiery. Think of orchards scathed and seared by the burning breath of cruel, relentless batteries; think of outcast families, driven into the wide world—with no hope, no future, but that of charity—and thank Heaven that we have been so long spared these miseries.

But with all this the invader is among us: our ancient foe is upon us. By Dover and Folkestone, by Newhaven and Southampton, come the invading hosts. "Leicesstarrre-squarrre" resounds with the tramp of soles of foreign make, Soho has been given up to the occupation of the enemy, and Regent-street trembles with the step of the boots of France. Our towns and villages are besieged, our houses occupied, and our larders ravaged. We are invaded, and by a host that would shame the Norman Conquest, and yet we lie idly by, and never heed.

Do you know, good readers, that this foreign inroad means penury and starvation? Do you know that this happy land of ours is the enforced resting-place for thousands of indigent guests? Do you know that now is the time to bury the historical hatchet, and let it sprout into a carving-knife to cut wholesome rations?

Never has there been seen so swift a stroke of misery as that which has fallen upon France. But a few months ago, an irresponsible peasantry watched the growing undulating crops; the quiet routine of the calm summer country life was unbroken; and now, the plough furrows its way through the graves of dead kindred, and the stern hand of a triumphant foe gives blood-red seed to the sower. Villages have been obliterated, and their former sites are only traceable by heaps of charred and blackened bricks. Field and hedgerow, the farmer's landmarks of his estate, have disappeared, and the spots where vine or corn have grown are lost in a trackless waste. From the ruined homesteads comes a clamouring crowd, needy and hungry, to our shores—their roof shelter has gone, and from many even the means of procuring the commonest necessaries of life. We must comfort and care for them. For too many troubled years we were enemies—we now know the blessed advantages of being friends. We must show them that the housekeeper's room, and the British purse-holder's strength, are fortresses that will bear a great deal of sapping. We islanders may stand a siege of kindness that will mock any of those that have brought our neighbours to these straits.

Stroll with me to the Latin quarter of Soho, where in nearly every house the invaders have effected a lodgment, from the ground floor to the attics. The blanchisseuses de fin are starching, ironing, crimping, and plaiting from early morn till late at night, for our neighbours have come to us, many of them, with but a scanty supply of linen, and the shirt and jupon of yesterday must be renovated for the duties of to-morrow. Brisk marketing goes on during the early hours of the day. Surely we might be in the neighbourhood of the Halles Centrales. See those women with baskets on their arms and nothing on their heads but the plain white cap, with the tiniest of flutcd borders. Watch them as they go into the boulangerie française and come out again with a loaf a yard in length, follow them to the charcutier's, and hear them clamour for boudin, and cotelettes froides aux cornichons. Look at them, how they peer into the slenderly furnished purse, and hesitate over the price of a coveted luxury, a luxury perhaps that

may be purchased for almost the smallest coin. Ah! poor women, many of them have husbands fighting and starving in beleaguered fortresses, or, worse still, eating black bread in some German prison camp. The "maudite monnaie," which puzzles them so in bartering, must be carefully economised, for where is more to come from when that is gone? The luxury is left untouched, and a spare meal, made up with but little meat, suffices the craving of the day.

Soho, amongst others of its French peculiarities, abounds in restaurants and estaminets; not grand halls of white and gold, with marble tables and crimson velvet cushions, but modest little retreats where the shop has been turned into a salle à manger or café. In one of these I have taken my dinner for days past, and so well am I known that I have a numbered ring, napkin, and pigeon-hole all to myself. This is a great advantage, as my napkin has had time to dry, and I escape the peril, as I spread it across my knees, of an attack of rheumatism, which the damp cloth, distributed to chance customers, makes imminent.

My restaurant is perhaps one of the least pretentious of the many humble dining-rooms in its vicinity. The expenditure of half a crown would elevate the reckless spendthrift to the rank of a millionaire, and I believe if any one were to go as far as three shillings, the dame de comptoir and the garçon would lose themselves utterly with excitement. I like my restaurant, and am on the very best of terms with all its staff, even to the chef, who, after all the dinners have been cooked, has occasionally joined me in a petit verre. This is how I came to frequent it.

Rambling one afternoon between Leicester-square and Oxford-street, I came, towards nightfall, on a well-lit, muslin-curtained window. In yellow paint, upon the glass, I read the announcement, "Café Restaurant," "à la carte ou à prix fixe." Here was just what I wanted. I was fasting, and it being the dinner-hour, I should not fail to meet numbers of the refugees of whom I was in search, at dinner. The room was crowded, and that peculiar odour which pervades the French cuisine, greeted me as I entered. But one vacant place remained, at a table where already were seated three persons, two ladies and a very, very old gentleman. My dinner ordered, I turned to look about me. One step from a London thoroughfare, and I was in the midst of France—I might have been in the Rue de Pologne, instead of in the street of the Greeks, in the district of Soho. Well, I dined modestly as became me, having in mind the companionship in which I found myself, and altogether was well served for a very small sum. Certainly, I might reasonably have taken exception to the soup, which was a thin yellowish liquid, very tasteless and very hot, but, with the assistance of a great deal of pepper and ketchup, I tried to convince myself that the consommé had a flavour after all. Besides, the two ladies at my table—mother and daughter, as I afterwards discovered—daintily sipped at the scalding fluid as if they were satisfied, why then should not I be content? The elder lady did the honours of the simple repast, which, instead of being ordered for three, was served for two only, and the way in which she presided, made me feel, that though not of the party, I was dining in excellent company. And we had wines, too, or I should say wine, on our table, and I, gourmand that I was, drank greedily an entire bottle, while they simply coloured the water in their tumblers from a modest pint shared between the three. When the garçon brought madame the note, the confession of poverty was made; the cost of their dinner, for three people, did not exceed the sum I paid for the very modest meal I had been content with.

Let me endeavour to describe my table companions, and then judge if the growing interest I felt in them was remarkable. The old gentleman I took to be somewhere about seventy. He had a long, drooping, white moustache, and his grey hair, still thick, was cut close to the head. Eyes full of fire scintillated from the deep shadow cast by a massive brow. The features were handsome, and sharply cut, and taking from his face the furrows of time, one might see in it the reflex of madame, and, in a lesser degree, of her daughter. The stooping shoulders took somewhat from his height, which, in his younger days, must have been that of a life-guardsman; the rosette of the Legion of Honour decorated his closely buttoned coat. I was ready to wager he had been a soldier. Madame, his daughter, might have been forty, but there was an expression of trouble and sorrow in the countenance that, perhaps, added a year or two to her appearance. She was very dark, and a very handsome likeness of her father. The girl, who, strange to say, was extremely fair, bore a striking resemblance to both

in feature. My knowledge of the relationship which bound them grew from the conversation at table. That they were of good—perhaps gentle—birth was unmistakable; that they were struggling to live and pinching themselves from necessity was also apparent. After the coffee, taken without cognac, the two ladies rose, and with them the old gentleman. Instinctively I felt that I should rise also, and bow as they retired. Bow I certainly did, and both mother and daughter made me a salutation as they withdrew. Monsieur, after conducting them to the door, returned and resumed his seat, and was presently joined by a ruddy, good-humoured-looking person, who might have been some ten years his junior. The new comer, who wore spectacles and a black velvet skull-cap, was a totally different sort of individual to my ancient chevalier of the Legion of Honour. He had all the characteristics of the bon bourgeois type, and, to tell the truth, I inwardly resented the intrusion, which seemed to mar the picture I had created in my mind—it was a bit of vulgar colour which destroyed the harmony of the composition.

"Would monsieur permit the cloth to be removed?" This was to me from my chevalier, and in French.

"Undoubtedly; it is what I should myself desire."

"Monsieur est Français?"

"No; I have not that honour." And then I felt immediately that, in my desire to be unusually polite, I had said something awkward.

"I congratulate monsieur; it is no great honour now."

And the two settled down to dominoes and cigarettes, and I to studying the different groups.

Presently came in a vendor of French journals, which were eagerly purchased by those who could spare the somewhat prohibitory sum demanded. Others contented themselves with the "Situation" and "l'International," published in London for the use of the Gallic colony. Now the room was filled with smoke and eager voices, arguing, disputing, and canvassing the scraps of intelligence, and loudest above the clamour could be heard the passionate exclamations of a knot of young fellows who might, it seemed to me, have been better employed in shouldering a musket with the army of the Loire. And so evidently thought my chevalier of the Legion of Honour.

"Hearest thou, mon ami, the vacarme que font ces brigands là?" asked he of his companion, "for me, I would rather have to do with Prussians;" and with a good round old-soldierly adjective at "ces criards fainéants," he continued the game.

I kept my place so long as my friend of the red ribbon kept his; when he left I followed soon, for to me the room had lost its interest with his departure. Another evening, and another, I found myself seated at the same table and in the same companionship. Madame and mademoiselle had now a pleasant smile for me, and a "Bon soir, monsieur!" as I took my accustomed place. As for the chevalier, he and I were getting on famously, and had gone so far as to clink together our glasses of the thin red wine. I longed to coax the old gentleman into a modest debauch, to supplement the vin ordinaire with a bottle of something more generous; but madame's bearing, though charming, forbade such an experiment. At length arrived my opportunity. The ladies, as usual, had left after coffee had been served, and no velvet skull-cap came to take the vacant place. The old chevalier rolled cigarette after cigarette, and lit and tossed them aside with impatience. Now for it. I would establish closer relations with Monsieur.

"Monsieur will perhaps permit me to be of his parti this evening?"

"Ah! but you are too good, ça pourrait vous ennuyer."

"On the contrary, I am quite at monsieur's service."

Jules brought the dominoes. I whispered him as the chevalier rattled the numbers, and Jules positively remained for an instant speechless with astonishment. I had asked for a bottle of Pomard. A consultation followed with the dame de comptoir, and then Jules tucked up his apron, and rushed from the house. Surely he had not gone to fetch the police? No. Just as we had finished our first game, Jules reappeared with the coveted wine. The cellar of my restaurant is not rich in Burgundy, and so my Pomard had been sought and obtained at some neighbouring restaurant of greater pretensions.

It required some pressing to induce my friend to join me, il avait prit son café—and Pomard was a vin capiteux; but, finally, the ruddy Rubicon was passed, and the old chevalier sipped at his glass with much contentment. Very soon we dropped our game, and got to good, honest talk. I was right. Monsieur de B. had

served "when French soldiers did not dishonour the flag." Monsieur had reached the grade of colonel before accepting his retraite: "Ah, il y a vingt ans depuis ça." He had campaigned in Africa with Changarnier, Lamoricière, and, ma foi! le Duc d'Aumale. Monsieur de B. was not an ardent Imperialist, though his gendre, madame's husband, had been decorated, after Magenta, by the emperor. Yes, his son-in-law had taken part in the present disastrous war, and had been one of the earliest victims. Le pauvre garçon fell wounded and a prisoner into the hands of the Prussians at Mars-la-Tour; they had since heard that his left arm had been amputated; he was chef de bataillon de chasseurs à pied. "Monsieur, je suis honteux, that I find myself here; I am still vigorous, and could take a musket with the Mobiles, or at least I might assist to drill them. But, que voulez vous, I must have a care for mes enfants, for we have no home now." And here the old soldier faltered, and a tear trickled down a furrow in his cheek.

"Ah, mais quel misère, monsieur, we who have never wanted, we who had a charming property on the banks of the Moselle. Our harvest has all been requisitioned, the grapes have either rotted or been gathered by the Prussian soldiers, whose officers occupy the home we have fled from. But, à la guerre comme à la guerre, nous autres might have done the same, beyond the Rhine. Ah, monsieur, my daughter and her child suffer horribly; they have been used to luxury, and see how they feed in this place. It is terrible, I who say it to you, monsieur; they are always hungry, but we dare not eat our means at once. For me it is nothing; I am an old soldier, et je ne doit pas me plaindre. Why should I, is not mon gendre a prisoner, là bas en Allemagne? And badly wounded too. Do you know, monsieur, that we live in two rooms, bien mesquin et bien bon marché, for we must send to Alphonse a portion of the little we have brought away with us. Le Seigneur alone knows when we shall get more. Monsieur, j'ai le cœur gros, I can drink no more wine, I must go to my daughter and her child." And hastily the ancient chevalier, as though fearing some exhibition of weakness, saluted me and left. I have not seen him since—Poverty may have closed even that humble restaurant against him. And in this Latin quarter are many whose penurious condition keeps them from the café doors, and who starve and suffer in the wretched holes to which their misfortunes have driven them.

It was but the other day, that walking down Tottenham-court-road, I fell in with a group that could not but in the first instance excite my attention, and afterwards my compassion. A young Frenchwoman, neatly but poorly clad, with spotless white cap upon her head, gave her arm to help the shambling gait of an old man, whom I heard her call, "Mon père." Clutching her dress on the disengaged side was a tiny, toddling figure, almost identically costumed with the mother—une petite femme, every inch of her, with nothing infantine about her, but the great wondering black eyes, set in the dimpled baby face. Their way seemed mine, and I lingered on the track. At every greengrocer's, at every butcher's, the group halted; the grandfather and his daughter eyeing with indecision the tempting vegetables that might daintily season the scanty pot au feu, or debating the cost of the piece of beef which should furnish the soup for which they hungered.

"Mais mon père," said the woman, after a minute examination of a well-stocked front of meat. "Mais mon père, je n'y comprends rien, qu'est ce que ça veut dire, le chiffre neuf, et la lettre d?"

"Démandez donc ma fille," touchily replied the old man. "Démandez donc, il ne s'agit pas de nous promener tout la journée, sans rien manger; moi je créve de faim."

Here was my opportunity. With a salutation, such as I had once learned to make use of in my old Parisian days, I begged they would let me help them in their difficulty. The figure nine and letter d, the meaning of which to them was as unknown as Coptic or Parsee, I explained, and for the first time in my life, I found myself cheapening beef. Ah, well! Though theirs was but a slender purse, the butcher was a kind-hearted man, and these three invading mouths found some employment that day. Madame told me that her father, herself, and little one were from Bougival, "Ou se trouve actuellement ces méchants Prussiens," that "Mon Dieu!" they had been driven from their home, "en emportant absolument rien," not even the most simple of necessaries, not even "de quoire faire un paquet," not even "that," and madame forcibly illustrated her meaning, by making the nail of her thumb crack between some very white teeth. Her husband was a Mobile in Paris, and she and "vieux papa, avec la petite,"

had gathered what little money they could and had come to seek a relation in London, whom they could not find. He was gone, no one knew where, and their means were rapidly following him. "Ah! monsieur, ce n'est que le bon Dieu maintenant, qui peut nous venir en aide," and madame cried and crossed herself, drawing "la petite" nearer to her side, and, with many thanks for the slight service I had been able to render them, they went on their sorrowful way.

We are told that France has brought all this suffering upon herself, and that, as she has sown, so must she reap. But is an entire population to be made accountable for the ambition of a governing few? Are women and children fit victims for the bloody Moloch of war? Are the old, the weak, and the helpless always to suffer for the sins of emperors and marshals? Must the innocent always be whelmed in the ruin of the guilty? Alas! In France, at least, it must be so for many weeks, and months, and even weary years to come. What gigantic misery must reign in the desolated fields and towns of that most unhappy country—misery that ready and most generous help from without will scarcely be able even to mitigate—can be known only to Him, who, for reasons wise, though inscrutable to us, permits such things to be. But here, in this rich and peaceful country, we can do something—much even—to help these poor fugitives in our midst. Let it be remembered that help, to be useful, must be promptly rendered, and let our help be given at once.

USELESS WARNINGS.

Izaak Walton tells us in his discourse on perch, that "if there be twenty or forty in a hole, they may be at one standing all catched one after another, they being like the wicked of the world not afraid though their fellows and companions perish in their sight."

The inapitude to take a hint on a matter literally of vital importance, which is here attributed to the perch genus, is not by any means confined to that rash and foolhardy tribe. Certain specimens of a race the members of which ought to know better—the genus homo—are also liable to be taken in in the same manner, one after another, to an extent which is simply amazing. It appears positively to no purpose whatever, that the invariably unfavourable issue of certain proceedings is set plainly before a particular section of mankind. The trap, which they have been told, over and over again, will snap down upon them if they venture into it, is still not set in vain; the hook, which it has been carefully explained to them lies concealed inside the dangling bait, is ignored and set at nought, till it is suddenly found to be firmly embedded in their jaws.

Foremost amongst the examples of this curious incapability of taking warning I should place that extraordinary readiness which a great many men evince, to fall into the clutches of those knights of industry, who practise what may be called, for want of a better designation, the "ready-money swindle." This particular form of imposture—the shallowness of which is only exceeded by that of the mental capacity of its victims—is worked something in the following way.

A couple of gentlemen, endowed by nature with a greater capacity for spending money than for earning it honestly, appear in some public place—a carriage belonging to the Metropolitan Railway Company, or a river steamer, or where not—and engage in a conversation which invariably takes sooner or later what may be called a financial turn. One of the confederates — he who is best provided with conversational powers—generally begins to tell his companion a long story varying with "the taste and fancy" of the narrator, but always coming to the same point in the end. The narrator has just inherited a very large property from an eccentric relative, or a commercial scheme in which he had long been engaged has suddenly developed into an enormous success, or he has just returned from the colonies, gold-diggings, diamond-fields, or other wealth-producing regions with a huge amount of ready money in his possession. This last is the one point in the narrative which never varies. The teller of the story is always the most fortunate of men, and the best provided with ready money. Another unvarying element in the transaction is, that some third person who happens to be by, and who is a total stranger to the other two, is always appealed to, or in some way or other brought into the conversation; and the most extraordinary part of it all is, that this stranger always does fall into the conversation, and yields himself up as an implicit believer in the teller of the story, whether that gentleman describe himself as a diamond-finder, or a gold-digger, or a residuary legatee, or whatever else his imagination may suggest.

The attention of the unfortunate gull once secured, all goes as merrily as marriage bells. Gull is invited by the rich gentleman to adjourn with himself and friend to some tavern, where they can partake of a friendly glass. There is something—the rich gentleman says—about Gull that he likes; he wishes for Gull's better acquaintance, and thinks that he can put him in the way of a pecuniary transaction which will turn out an exceedingly profitable one. Gull at once agrees to the proposal of the "friendly glass," and the three repair to a public-house. Here the rich gentleman, to prove what a very rich gentleman he is, and that the story which he has told of his recent good fortune is all true, pulls out a quantity of sovereigns and bank-notes, which he duly displays before the dazzled eyes of Gull, and which he then hands over to his friend, begging him to take the same to that "party" he knows of who controls the funds of a certain investment, to have shares in which is to insure the acquirement of a large fortune. During his friend's absence the rich gentleman enlarges on the splendid nature of the investment, and frankly and cordially advises Gull, if he has any money about him, to do as he—the rich gentleman—has just done, adding, in answer to some inquiries concerning his friend's trustworthiness, which Gull—who goes in for being particularly shrewd and wide-awake—has thought it necessary to urge, that his friend is a man who may be trusted with untold gold, and that he has entire confidence in him, which he begs Gull to observe he has just proved by intrusting so large a sum of money to his friend's keeping.

The friend now comes back in high glee. He has seen the "party" and made the investment. It was lucky he went when he did, though, as the subscription-list was just closing, and after to-day it would not be possible to get "on" at any price; on hearing all which the rich gentleman expresses delight and gratitude, and once more urges Gull to invest, liberally proposing, if Gull will put down all he has about him, to lend him what may be necessary to make up a certain sum, less than which it would not be worth while to invest. To this proposal Gull, after a little hesitation, attributable to his profoundly cautious nature—on which the other congratulates him—consents, and hands over his money (supplemented by a small loan from the rich gentleman) to the obliging emissary, who acts in this case as a kind of benevolent go-between, and who goes off in a hurry with the money which he has just received, expressing great fear lest he may not be in time. After this worthy has taken his departure, the crisis is not long delayed. The rich gentleman very soon begins to express anxiety at his friend's not reappearing, and volunteers to go off in search of him, bidding Gull remain where he is till he returns. Of course neither he nor his confederate ever do return, and the ingenuous Mr. Gull sees neither his newly gained friends nor his newly lost money any more. This is an instance of only one of the forms in which this particular swindle is worked. It has many other developments. Sometimes the rich gentleman proposes a game of skittles for a large amount; sometimes he asserts that he can show a larger sum of money than anybody else, and dares our friend Gull to enter into competition with him. The result, however, is in every case the same.

Now does it not seem almost incredible that any human being, not absolutely an idiot, can be duped by such a shallow trick as any one of these, even on the very first occasion of its being tried? But when one comes to think that now, after the dodge has been worked over and over again, and over and over again exposed, people are still constantly taken in by it, one certainly does get at last to take a very hopeless view indeed of the intellectual condition of a large portion of the human race.

Another instance of this same inability, on the part of certain individuals, to profit by the experience of others, is furnished by the curious case with which a cheat of an altogether different order, whom we will call a shop-swindler, manages to cheat the proprietors of some of our large City and West-end businesses out of their property. A case illustrative of the proceedings of one of these "professors," and one which is sufficiently typical to merit quotation, occurred the other day. The professor—a lady in this case—walked into the place of business of an eminent jeweller and watchmaker in the City at eleven o'clock in the forenoon, and asked to see several articles of jewellery. Her request was granted, and after a display of not more than the usual amount of indecision, a gold watch and chain, and a diamond locket—the whole worth about one hundred and fifty pounds—were selected for purchase. So far all seems straightforward enough. It is after this point that the proceedings assume a circuitous character. The lady begins by

requesting that a shopman may be sent with her to her residence to receive payment for the articles chosen, a proposal which the subordinates shrink from consenting to on their own responsibility, and which is referred to the decision of the proprietor of the business. Upon this individual our professor at once begins to practise all sorts of cajolery and mystification, showing him the card of a clergyman of his acquaintance to whom she professes to be related, and making out as well that she is well acquainted with a certain neighbour, with whom the head of the firm is on intimate terms. This gentleman—concerning whom it is narrated that "he was completely taken off his guard by the artless and simple manners" of his visitor—is at last induced to comply with her request, and in due time she drives off in a cab with the valuable property in her possession, but accompanied, as she herself had wished, by one of the shopmen. Not a very difficult undertaking this, hitherto, nor requiring any very special gifts for carrying it out. The crucial moment is, however, to come. Passing by one of those large haberdashery and linen-drapery establishments, of which there are several in different parts of London, and which is provided with two entrances, one in a main thoroughfare and the other in an adjacent side street, the lady with the "artless manner" stops her cab, and informing the young man who accompanies her from the jeweller's that she has a purchase to make inside, tells him that she will not keep him waiting in the cab many minutes, and then prefers the modest request that she may be allowed to take the case containing the valuables with her into the shop. On what pretext she bases this last demand does not appear in the published accounts of this most remarkable case; perhaps she represented that she was about to select a dress to be worn with the jewels, and wished to see them together; perhaps she professed herself to have become so much attached to her new purchase as not to be able to bear it out of her sight for a moment; but, whatever she alleged, the astounding fact remains on record that her demand was complied with, and that she was allowed to get out of the cab and enter the establishment with the two entrances, with the case containing the valuables in her hand.

The sequel need not be recorded. Of course, the artless one did not re-appear. Of course, she made her escape—jewel-case in hand—by the side entrance; and, of course, the young man, after waiting for a certain length of time in sanguine expectation of the lady's return, became alarmed, and found out his mistake, and returned to his proprietor with the mournful intelligence that he had been most elaborately "done." "This is not the first occasion," the report of the case concludes, "on which Mr. —— has been similarly robbed."

Nor have other tradesmen in a large way of business, as a rule, fared better. There is hardly any large and prosperous establishment in this metropolis which has not more than one such instance of successful cajolery recorded on its annals. The way in which the cajolery is effected varies, no doubt. Sometimes the devoted goods are sent to a house where the gentleman who occupies the drawing-rooms, after demanding permission from the messenger, "to show them to the sick lady in the next room," passes gracefully through the folding-doors into the back room, which has a door giving on the staircase, and is seen no more. Sometimes the goods are actually paid for, but with a cheque which, when the time comes for turning it into hard cash, proves to be wanting in some element essential to the right constitution of such a document. Sometimes the swindle is effected in one way, sometimes in another. In three respects only are its characteristics always identical. First. There is always some unusual request made. Second. The maker of such request is always especially conciliatory in his manner. Third. There is always some story narrated of that intricate and elaborate kind, to which we give the familiar title of "rigmarole."

Of course, the fear of offending important customers by injurious suspicions, must make the responsibility of deciding whom to trust a sufficiently onerous one; still, one cannot help thinking that the proprietors of these great business establishments might easily exercise a greater amount of caution than they do, and profit to a much greater extent by an attentive perusal of the metropolitan police reports. One other illustration of the uselessness of warning in particular cases is required to make our list complete. The accidents which are so continually reported in the newspapers, as resulting from an insane propensity which some people show to point guns at their fellow-creatures, furnish such an illustration only too readily. The stories of disasters resulting from this most inexcusable and idiotic notion of a

joke are appallingly numerous, and so uniform in their character, that it almost seems as if a certain number of them might be kept ready-written at the offices of our different newspapers, waiting for the inevitable moment when they are sure to be wanted.

About these stories, as about those others with which we have just been occupied, there is—as has been said—a dire uniformity. Some young fellow, gifted, probably, with what the phrenologists call a small cranial capacity, walks into a room—oftenest a kitchen—in which the young woman with whom he keeps company is sitting at work, and seeing a gun propped against a wall in the corner, takes it up, points it at his mistress in fun, and, in fun still, and, of course, "knowing that it isn't loaded," pulls the trigger. Then, when the poor girl, "to whom he was to have been married next week," falls over on the floor, mortally wounded, he finds out that the gun was loaded, and, in the fulness of his dismay and misery, is ready to charge it once more and send the contents into his own foolish brains then and there.

This miserable tale, like the rest, has its slight variations. Sometimes it is at a friend of his own sex, and not at his sweetheart, that this foolish creature points the gun; sometimes he does not point it at all, but, playing with it, and pulling it about in an imbecile manner, "knowing," of course, "that it is not loaded," it goes off, and some one, who happens to be within range, is killed, or else maimed for life.

How many such dismal narratives as these has not every one who takes in a newspaper read and marvelled over, and with how much of mingled indignation and wonder? Indeed, these two feelings are called forth by each and every one of the instances of insensibility to warning which we have been considering. We wonder, and are angry, when we read about any of them, and say to ourselves, or to those about us, "Good Heavens! How is it that people are such fools?"

Such outbreaks of wrath are, however, of little worth, and it would be to much more purpose if we could manage to extract, from the mass of such records as those which have been quoted above, some one or two conclusions which might turn out to be useful, instead of useless, warnings, and be of service to that large section of society which comprises the easily-duped, the rash, and the fool-hardy. To all such, and to all others whom it may concern, the following safe rules are strongly recommended:

Always be shy of talkative strangers, and quite determined to decline any proposals of a social nature which they may make.

Always mistrust long narratives and intricate explanations, when they tend to bring about the transfer of property of any kind from yourself to the narrator.

Always regard every gun with which you come in contact, as loaded, and highly dangerous.

A PERTURBED SPIRIT.

THERE have been many goblins much more awful than the one which incessantly tormented a series of worthy pastors in the village of Gröben, but there never were any so intensely and so persistently disagreeable. The goblin in question did not aspire to the performance of any grand and terrible feat. Of such aspiration his paltry soul—if he had a soul—was incapable. He was a lubber fiend, in the strictest sense of the word; as stupid as he was malignant—a Puck of the worst sort; a Robin Goodfellow who had degenerated into a Robin Bad-fellow. It was his ambition to be handed down to posterity as the greatest supernatural nuisance that ever afflicted the sub-lunar world, and his ignoble hopes were realised. Of the situation of Gröben some of our readers may possibly be ignorant. We therefore state that it is not very distant from Jena, and that the duty of its pastor is to administer spiritual instruction to a congregation of simple peasants, resident at the western extremity of the Thuringian Forest.

Dull boys are sometimes distinguished by a power of application which greatly counterbalances their dulness, and enables them, in the long run, to surpass their more precocious comrades. In like manner, the goblin of Gröben, not naturally or supernaturally bright, was wonderful for his perseverance, and it was by slow, not to say painful steps, that he ascended the summit of that bad eminence, which he afterwards occupied to his own eternal infamy. He believed, like Mr. Wordsworth, that a star looks brightest when there is only one in the sky; so, although he was doubtless as old as the Germans of the time of Tacitus, he did not care to risk his notoriety by rushing upon mankind too soon. Had he manifested himself in the age of Faust and Mephistopheles, or in those immediately preceding, he would have been lost in a crowd of fiends and spirits, all

much brighter than himself; so, in spite of a burning desire for mischief, he repressed his longings, and bided his time. He seems first to have revealed his existence shortly before the close of the Thirty Years' War —that is to say, about the middle of the seventeenth century, when the old superstitious beliefs of mediæval Europe were on the decline; but even then he cautiously felt his way, and refrained from displaying his full power. It was not till the eighteenth century, the age of Voltaire, that he put forth his strength in bad earnest. He then so distinguished himself from ordinary village goblins, that he became the subject of a learned book.

We will begin with him at the beginning, that is to say, in the year 1646, when the then pastor of Gröben, Johannes Rodigast, was greatly annoyed by the visits of a mysterious grey monk, who somehow or other contrived to enter his study without noise, and seated himself cosily before the fire. The monk neither talked himself nor listened to the talk of his unwilling host, who found that his hints on the propriety of a speedy retirement were utterly disregarded. Weary of the intrusion, Johannes Rodigast at last boldly asked the monk who he was, whence he had come, and what he wanted, adding some words of solemn exhortation. These words were so far efficient that the monk vanished, but unfortunately his figure was not to be erased from the memory of the pastor, who took to moping, and after moping for upwards of thirty years, put a violent end to his own existence.

Weighing the case with impartiality, we find that we can scarcely hold the monk responsible for this terrible calamity. He went away, when exhorted with a due measure of force, and if the pastor fretted himself for more than thirty years afterwards, it is hard to see a close connexion between the alleged cause and the alleged effect.

The goblin, who of course is identical with the monk, kept himself quiet during the long remainder of poor Rodigast's life, but he was only preparing for more showy exploits. Probably he was amazed at the success of his first paltry feat. To dress himself like a grey monk, and to sit down sulkily by a fire, was no great achievement after all.

The immediate successor of Rodigast in his sacred office was Adam Dimler, one of those prudent men who meet a difficulty with a compromise. He in his time was honoured by the grey monk with a visit, but, instead of having recourse to exhortations, he simply moved his books and his desk into another room, and allowed his visitor to retain the chosen apartment. He was thus in no worse predicament than many a scion of an ancient race, whose ancestral residence is said to be haunted. The door of the suspected room remains shut, and the inhabitants of the mansion are probably comfortable, till some unlucky visitor arrives, and cannot be accommodated save in the Blue Chamber, where he meets some horror, which he describes to his host at breakfast, and is at once delicately warned that he had better keep his information to himself.

Heinrich Stemler, the immediate successor to Simler, was subjected to sundry annoyances, but their precise nature does not seem to have been recorded. For the next pastor, Jeremias Heinisch, the goblin had reserved his main force. The miserable stratagem of donning a monk's habit was not to be tried again. It had partially failed already, when practised upon Adam Simler, and Jeremias Heinisch was a man who, though an orthodox Lutheran minister, boasted of his utter disbelief in spiritual manifestations. Jeremias Heinisch would have set down the grey monk as an optical illusion, and have gone on preparing his sermon for Sunday as composedly as if he had been alone in his study. If Jeremias Heinisch was to be hit, more practical means were required.

The new pastor had built himself a new cattle-shed in his court-yard, and on the roof of this edifice stones were thrown, by an unseen hand, for five successive days in the June of 1718. The stones were not large, but they came down with a prodigious rattle, and it was a singular circumstance that they were always thrown in the daytime, never at night. The thrower loved notoriety, for whenever a crowd of persons surrounded the house to witness the performance the shower was continued with redoubled vigour.

All this annoyance was set down to the account of some naughty boy by the strong-minded pastor, who laughed at the superstitious fears of his flock, and thus the only man in the district who did not believe in the ghost was precisely the man whose house was haunted. He had two enemies to contend against—the human thrower of stones, whoever he might be, and the crass ignorance of the peasantry, who had not forgotten the sad fate of Johannes Rodigast.

To secure the former he set a strict watch about his premises, himself being the principal watchman; to convince the latter, he caused some of his own people to throw stones on the cow-shed from a place of concealment, intending, at the end of the performance, to come forward and explain to the appalled spectators the natural means by which the apparently supernatural phenomenon had been produced. Both plans failed. On the one hand nobody was caught, on the other hand the stones thrown by the pastor's order were seen during their passage through the air, whereas the other stones did not become visible till they had actually touched the roof. The pastor, however, held his ground, and, still convinced that some mischief-makers of the village were at the bottom of the nuisance, spread a report that he was about to commence a strict judicial inquiry, and that the offenders, if discovered, would be subjected to severe punishment.

This last stroke of policy seemed to be successful. The stone-throwing left off, and for five weeks not a rattle was heard on the roof of the shed. The pastor was naturally in high glee. The mischief-makers had been rendered harmless, and the voice of superstition had been hushed. One afternoon, towards the end of July, he walked complacently through his fields, chatted with his reapers about his own superior enlightenment, and hinted that they should feel proud of a pastor who had kept so completely aloof from vulgar error. Ah, for some time to come that was the last bright day for poor Jeremias Heinisch. As he approached his homestead his servants came rushing towards him with the sad intelligence that at three o'clock—the very hour of his discourse with the reapers—the rattle on the roof of the shed had recommenced.

Had the goblin been annoyed by the vaunts of Jeremias Heinisch, and would the goblin have remained quiet if Jeremias Heinisch had held his tongue? We cannot say. Certain it is, that he seemed resolved to make up for lost time. Nevertheless, the gallant pastor still held his own. On Sunday, the 31st of the month, he preached in the afternoon a sermon on a topic of great local interest. Some of his parishioners had expressed the opinion that, as a punishment for self-destruction, poor Johannes Rodigast was not allowed to repose in his grave, and that the irrepressible stone-thrower was no other than the restless spirit of that unfortunate man. This was just the sort of doctrine that Jeremias Heinisch loved to attack; and, in his eloquent discourse, he convinced himself, if not his congregation, that his ill-starred predecessor had no hand in the revived nuisance. Having returned home from church, satisfied that he had well done his duty, he looked out of the window of his upper room upon the spacious court-yard below, complacently reflecting on the theme of his sermon, and the masterly manner in which it had been handled, when the course of his meditation was interrupted by a most astounding phenomenon. A stone lifted itself out of the pavement of the court-yard, and visibly flung itself upon the roof of the shed. The pastor tried to persuade himself that the stone was in reality a bird, and went to bed affectionately nursing that opinion, but, on the following morning, when the throwing commenced early, his stubborn incredulity began to give way. Many stones now rose from the pavement, others flew out of the walls of the house, describing curves beyond the power of any projectile thrown by human means, and, what was more curious, they did not leave so much as a chink behind them. Convinced at last that he had to deal with a spiritual foe, Jeremias boldly addressed his persecutor in a tone of solemn exhortation, which, we grieve to say, caused the stones to rattle down with greater violence than ever. One missile, larger than the rest, directed itself towards the pastor's face, but dropped midway. The person of Jeremias was evidently sacred.

Hitherto all the stones had been thrown on the roof of the cow-shed, but early in August this limit was passed, and the parsonage itself was invaded; the moment when the pastor had just taken his seat at the dinner-table being selected for especial demonstrations of violence. As before, however, the throwing always ceased at nightfall, to be renewed at break of day.

Unable to endure the annoyance any longer, Jeremias, on the 4th of August, set out for Jena to lay his case before the celebrated professor of theology, Dr. Buddeus, commending the parsonage to the care of his wife and household. During his absence the bombardment was carried on with even increased vigour, and as he approached his home, after his consultation with the learned doctor, he had the pleasure of witnessing the demolition of the window-panes in his lower room. The work of destruction was as methodical as

it was incessant. If any one went close to the window the pane was indeed smashed, but the stone fell outside the house; whereas if the observer receded from the window, the stone flew far into the room. It should be added, that one party of spirits seemed to be besieging another, which offered a stout resistance, since not only did stones fly from the yard into the room, but others flew from the room into the yard, a heap raised in each place recording the multiplicity of the shots.

Before dawn, on the 5th of August, the pastor's wife gave birth to a son, who was christened by his father on the afternoon of the same day. The good man stood on the very spot in his room where a missile of extraordinary size had fallen; and the holy rite of baptism apparently so awed the enemy, that for three days the house was tranquil. Jeremias began to hope that the nuisance was at an end for ever, but soon found that the peace he had supposed lasting was merely a brief armistice. On the 9th the invincible stone-throwers returned to their work like giants refreshed, and continuing the old system till the 23rd, began in the evening of that day to overstep the limit they had previously respected, and pelted throughout the night, while the rattle of stones and pieces of lead was disagreeably accompanied by scratchings at all the doors and cupboards. On the following day an alarming activity was manifest in the crockery, plates and pots smashing themselves to pieces in the most reckless manner. A cheese, too, was tossed from the pantry into one of the rooms, though the door between them was locked; and this cheese, when examined, looked as if it had been clawed by a dog.

The stout heart of Jeremias now sank within him. His servants vowed they could remain with him no longer; his wife was sinking under the weight of the annoyance; and the counsels tendered by the learned and pious men, whom he consulted, were most conflicting; some advising him to resist the Evil One to the last, others exhorting him to leave a house so filled with abomination. No wonder that occasionally, in fancy, he saw the haggard figure of Johannes Rodigast, and feared that he might end his life like that wretched man.

On the 25th, following the advice of an eminent physician, he removed his wife and child, with a few of the more valuable articles of furniture, to another dwelling, he himself remaining at the parsonage, under the protection of a body-guard, composed of villagers. On the 7th of September—the annoyances having continued till that date—burning coals flew out of the stove, through the windows, and were scattered about the yard. Then the persecutors seemed to be weary of persecution. Only one stone was thrown on the 8th, and that was—the last. Trusting that peace was now attained, the pastor brought back his wife to the parsonage, which remained undisturbed till the year 1835, when it was pulled down, and a new one was built in its stead.

In 1719 an anonymous work appeared, in which the facts we have recorded were grossly exaggerated, and used to prove that the laws against witchcraft should not have been abolished. In another book, written by one Gottfried Wahrlieb, the wonders were treated in an opposite spirit, the whole affair being regarded as a gross imposition. Displeased with both these publications, Jeremias Heinisch thought that the time had arrived when he might properly address the world on a subject with which he was more familiar than any one else, and he accordingly, in 1723, produced a neat little volume on the Kobold of Gröben, which is now extremely scarce, but a copy of which is to be found in the library of the University of Jena. To a description of the contents of this book, written by the German antiquary, Herr Kurt Gress, we are indebted for our knowledge of the marvels above narrated.

And how are those marvels explained? They are not explained at all.

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THE DOCTOR'S MIXTURE.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER XXVIII. ALL FRIENDS AGAIN.

THAT evening, when the Doctor was at his dinner, word was brought in that my Lord Shipton wished to speak to him. His lordship entered with a sort of mysterious manner, and without the least sense of having had any little "awkwardness" with his friend.

"See here, my dear Findlater, you're not going to let this go on—it's pushing the matter too far."

"Let what go on?" said the Doctor, innocently.

"Oh! this thing—this process; harassing a man like Ridley with law and all that. You're not going to drag the whole parish before a court?"

"But I am, you included, my lord. O'Reardon tells me he can get costs off every man of you—you're all good marks!"

"Oh! my dear sir, you can't think of such a thing. I made you every amende."

"Almond, or no almond, those are his words: good marks for costs, says he. It's out of my hands; he has his instructions."

Lord Shipton looked utterly miserable, and shrank and shivered in his light clothes.

"Good Heavens, Findlater, you can't be so malicious! There's Ridley, indeed, who stirred up the whole business, though he sent me to-night to make you his excuses, and see what can be done."

"Sent you, indeed! Why couldn't he come himself?"

"Oh! yes, and he wrote you this letter. Listen: 'Mr. Ridley regrets having been misled by certain reports, and begs to withdraw any statements that seem to reflect on Doctor Findlater's character. He hopes that Doctor Findlater will have all proceedings stayed.'"

"And with that bit o' writing he thinks to patch up his infamous behaviour! It would serve him right to hunt him through every court in the kingdom, from th' Exchequer to the Common Pleace—the commonest would be too good for him. Give me that bit o' paper, Shipton, and we'll see what O'Reardon will say—whether it amounts to an almond, as you call it." Thus disposing of the visitor and his embassy, and bowing out Lord Shipton, he was left to himself to pursue the many devices that were on his mind.

After much anxious meditation, he found himself taking the road up to Leadersfort. He had put Lord Shipton's and Mr. Ridley's letters into his pocket, determining to turn them to good profit, and create a diversion. As he entered the avenue, he met the Leader carriage laden with trunks, and saw that the Seaman family were leaving. "So best," said the Doctor.

He walked into the drawing-room, where Mrs. Leader and her brother were seated, with another gentleman, whom the Doctor did not know. There was an anxious, worn look on Mrs. Leader's face. They stopped some consultation as he entered. "Regular lion's den," thought the Doctor to himself, "and I'm the Daniel."

"We are engaged," said the lady, curtly, "as you may see."

"A thousand pardons. I'll go up-stairs and see my child."

The brother here interposed. "We cannot have Mr. Leader harassed—you will understand that. It is my duty to tell you that, with these serious charges hanging over your family, he has completely changed his feelings towards you and your daughter."

"Oh! of course. But you know they're unfounded—all trumped up!"

"Of course—such things always are! But until they are proved to be so, he desires to have no communication with you. You may go up, if you wish, and satisfy yourself."

"Come along, then," said the Doctor. "But if he tells me to stay, I suppose I may?"

"Of course——"

"And if he tells you to leave the house," said Mrs. Leader, "care will be taken that he is obeyed."

"Nothing can be fairer, ma'am."

The party went up. As soon as the Doctor appeared in the room, Mr. Leader turned away pettishly.

"Keep this man away. He brings me worry and disgrace. You have imposed on us——"

The Doctor said gravely: "I shall leave, sir, the moment you desire. But first allow me to say two words. These charges have been withdrawn. Miss Leader, run your eyes over these two letters—the first, from the Honourable William Ridley; the second, from the Right Honourable the Lord Shipton, the ringleaders of the movement, if I may so call them.

Mary Leader read out the two letters in a low voice.

"In other words, the case has broken down, and a slandered man stands before you. I think in this house some almond is due to my poor, injured Katey, who has been treated like some paryah——"

"Oh, I said so!" said Mr. Leader, eagerly. "I knew they were calumnies, and that the household where she was, or the family in which she lived, could never be the scene of such things. Oh!" said he, at once, "it is frightful this injustice; and I spoke so cruelly to her!"

"This excitement is very bad," said Mr. Morrison, "and will have the worst effect. Go away all of you, please."

Mary Leader had gone—had flown to Katey's room, and in a moment had returned with her as the others came out. The Doctor cast his arms about his child, and clasped her to his breast as she entered.

"No one will be so glad as this treasure," he said, "at her father being rayhabilletated!"

"Ah, there she is," said the sick man. "I knew that it was all false; that you, my dear, could never have aided in such things, or have been the affectionate child of a man that could do such things. But I thank Heaven that I have not been guilty of any injustice towards you. I will put it beyond my power now. Send up that solicitor, and he shall prepare everything, and I shall sign while I have strength and capacity. At the threshold, it may be, of another life I shall do what is right and just. I am determined on it. Katey, my dear child, I shall make up to you and to your husband for all the injustice you have borne!"

Mrs. Leader's lips quivered; her foot could be heard pattering restlessly on the ground; she could say nothing, do nothing, save murmur some incoherent platitudes about his agitating himself. The quiet satisfaction in the Doctor's eyes stung her. In a moment Mary Leader had gone down, and had returned, leading the man of law. There was nothing very elaborate. A sheet of note-paper was all that was necessary, and a quarter of an hour's time was sufficient. At the end of that period Mr. Morrison and the lawyer came down to tell her what had been done—all had been left to Cecil Leader, with a settlement for Mrs. Leader, another for Katey and Mary Leader. It was duly witnessed, and in every way regular. It would stand.

"The game is up," said her brother to her, in a low voice. "That scheming Doctor has beaten us, and Mrs. Katey will be installed some day in this place."

Mrs. Leader waited till the legal gentleman had left the room, and then said:

"Never, Randall! Game up, indeed!—it is only beginning. A dozen wills may yet be made, and one *shall* be! That beggarly woman has not seen half my resources. Now that they have defied us, I tell you this: she shall never live in this place, or turn me out—no, not if I was to be dragged to a jail for it!" Her brother looked at her with wonder; he had often seen her vindictive and spiteful in a gentle, cat-like way, but never furious, and lost to all control, as she was at that moment. "From the day that creature forced herself in here, I felt—I knew that she was destined to try and ruin me. I have felt my dislike to her increasing every hour. I saw the end of her demure tricks, and the influence she was trying to obtain over that unfortunate man up-stairs. And now, see what she has done—she herself and her gang in possession of the whole estate! And we turned out with what I call a pittance—ah! never!—never!"

"What would you do?"

"Never! Sick and dying, indeed!—I

don't believe it. His illness has only brought out his weakness and folly. Any one could turn him round his finger. He'll live long, I tell you, and he shall live to undo what he did to-day. He shan't degrade me before the world—make a pauper of his own wife, to exalt a low, common apothecary's daughter, and put her in my place! But they will see, and that before a few hours."

"Why, what can you do?" he asked again.

"Tear it up—make him sign another! I would keep no terms with such folly and wickedness. There he is now, listening to her sweet comforts—her gentle, plausible twaddle—and he pouring his soft, pious gratitude into her ear. I am very glad this has happened, for she thinks herself secure. *I* know what to do. Come with me, Randall. One day you shall have all this fine estate, and that girl shall marry you, and we shall get the title—baronetcy, peerage, even! My hands have been tied up to this time; I have no one to help me, or, rather, every one is against me. And then came this vile, miserable marriage, to drag us all down into the puddles. Come with me, Randall, to the boudoir—or stay, come back in half an hour."

She went back to the sick-room, and there found Katey reading the Bible to Mr. Leader. "You can go," said her stepmother, coldly. "I wish to speak to him."

The night was drawing on—a dark, wet, drizzly night. Lamps were beginning to be lighted, servants went about softly. Katey rose. The sick man looked after her, and stretched out his hands in alarm. "Don't go — don't leave me!" he cried. There was consternation written in his face, which signified plainly his consciousness that he had done something which might expose him to the old punishment of private rebuke. Indeed, nothing was more curious in this illness than this development of a childish irresolution, always prominent in Mr. Leader's timorous character. There was a sternness and contempt in Mrs. Leader's face.

"No wonder you are afraid to look me in the face after the piece of injustice you have done me. Do not disturb yourself—it is bad for you—but consult your conscience. I only come to tell *you*" (to Katey) "that you needn't remain. You have accomplished the work you and your family have planned"—this she added in a low voice—"so you may relax your labours."

Katey had long since seen the uselessness of self-justification or defence, so she merely rose up silently, and went her way. Mrs. Leader was left alone with her husband. Katey then heard the door locked on the inside.

Doctor Findlater was waiting to set out on his journey homewards, and was sitting in a sort of council with the London doctor, who had gone into the town to see the regimental surgeon, whom he had known before, and was now returned. The Doctor was in peace and good-humour with all men, and had been telling the town doctor how they "had got him to settle his affairs, and how all that was now happily shovelled off his mind."

When Katey announced to them that Mrs. Leader was with her husband, a sort of uneasiness spread over the faces of the party. After about an hour's absence she came down, with what seemed quite a changed manner, and said: "I have been with him all this time, and he has told me everything, and all that he has arranged. I can make no complaint; he has behaved to me fairly, and even handsomely. He has spoken in a calm, deliberate way, that has surprised me; and he engaged me to go down at once, and tell you all the impression that his words have left upon me."

"Nothing could be fairer, Mrs. Leader," said Doctor Speed; "and it is only what could be expected from you."

"It would be affectation," she went on, "my denying that I have been much displeased at—well, at what has taken place lately. I say openly, I disapprove of it still; and I still hold that the step Cecil Leader has taken disentitles him to any consideration. Yes," she added, turning to Katey, "you know me well by this time, and it must not be thought cruel, if I say that he and you ought to be punished, by being disinherited."

"Nothing like candour, ma'am," said our Doctor, warmly; "and I respect you the more for speaking out."

"Now, however, it is not time for such things. My poor husband is clearly dying. He thinks any steps of the kind would be revengeful and vindictive, and would rest on his soul. He has told me what he has arranged, and wishes that his last moments should be peaceful, and not disturbed by any struggles about his bed, and so I am content; and I am satisfied that you, Doctor Findlater, and your family, should remain, and that we should all do our best to make his last moments happy."

The Doctor advanced, and put out his hand. "If I might take the liberty, madam. I have never heard anything so generous or magnanimous. That's true nobility and self-abnegation."

The tender-hearted Katey felt a sense of shame overpowering her, at the rather unworthy hostility she had shown towards this cold but really upright woman. She advanced timorously, her hands out, her face pleading piteously, and glowing with a sense of having done injustice. Mrs. Leader saw the hesitation, and said quietly: "Don't be afraid, Katey; by-and-bye you will know me better, and come to do me justice."

With that Katey ran forward, and Mrs. Leader folded her cold arms about her. The Doctor looked on with a beaming face.

"Well," he said, "this was worth coming to see! Really y' extort this from me, Mrs. Leader, and I tell you so, that I have never seen such a noble magnanimity! Ah! now we'll all be friends again; and, please God, our poor fellow up-stairs will get better, and we'll all start a new life together, bearing and forbearing, and making the best of what's bad. It's generous and noble—that's what I say."

Mrs. Leader made no reply to these compliments beyond a bow. Then she said to Katey, "Come with me, dear, to the boudoir—I want to consult you." And the two quitted the room together. When the Doctor was left alone, an extraordinary change passed over his face.

"Th' old she-devil! What new game is this she's at—to throw us off the scent, I suppose, with her hyenaish blandishment. By the holy pepper, they ought to engage me at th' Haymarket. I'm an actor born and bred, and the way I played up to her face was noble! Oh," added the Doctor, pressing his hands to his forehead, "if my wits would only help me to beat her at this! She's got some deep tricks at work, and this is to put us to sleep. My goodness! if I could only be up to her. Worm this out, Fin; you mustn't let yourself have so much as ten winks till the crisis be past, and our minds get rest! But I must have allies, I can't do all myself. My goodness! what I've done is superhuman. Stay, here's the very one."

Mary Leader had entered, looking for her sister-in-law. In a moment the Doctor had drawn her over to the window, and was telling her his story; turning her, in short, into an ally. She had a vast deal of shrewd sense and penetration, though she had no worldly experience. And the Doctor put what had just taken place before her so graphically, that she at once leaped to the same conclusion. Only that conclusion was coloured by the daughter's tender affection. She was thinking of her loved and faithful father; his simple tastes, his weary life and drudgery in the midst of splendours which they both detested; their little expeditions; her sole friend, for hereafter she would be always face to face with an enemy. And now, after his cheerless life, to think that his last moments were to be harassed, and he was to pass away in the midst of importunings from greedy hands, and eyes, and voices! It should not be. Those awful moments, now not far away, should be held sacred; and at that moment, with eyes upturned to heaven, she aloud made a vow, consecrating herself to that filial and holy duty. Thus the Doctor secured the best ally in the world, and with her he concerted a plan.

CHAPTER XXIX. KATEY'S EXPEDITION.

Now was the night drawing on, and lights about the house. There was a stillness as of expectancy; the servants went about softly, and on tiptoe. The clergyman was again with the given-over patient. The London doctor sat in the parlour, writing letters. It seemed as if there was the shadow of the expected minutes already cast, and that they were conscious of it. At all events, here was Katey mournful and subdued, coming softly from the boudoir, fresh from Mrs. Leader's caresses, and persuaded that injustice had been done to that lady. It was all temperament, and an unfortunate manner, which gave a false idea of her character.

As she came out she was met by a servant with a letter for her, on a salver. She did not know the writing, and, going to her own room, read with astonishment:

My dear Mrs. Cecil Leader,—I am sure that you know me too well to suppose that it could be anything but the best intentions in the world, and a sincere interest in your family, that could tempt me to write to you as I am about to do.

She turned to look at the signature, and saw it was signed, Charles Montague.

You and your father have latterly been so much away from your house at Tilston, that it is natural you should not have remarked what has been going on. I am sorry to say others have been very observant, and

have not confined their notice to that; for the matter is a subject of daily remark.

There is a peculiar flutter that comes on as we read a letter that begins in a mysterious fashion of this sort: when all is so obscure that we know not what may be coming—a calamity, a shock, a surprise, perhaps only some trifle. Katey felt her heart sinking, for latterly the air had been so charged with signs and tokens of tempest and confusion—that any misfortune was "on the cards," as it were. She read on:

I had best say at once that this refers to your sister, Miss Polly. You will have known that she has formed a most unfortunate intimacy with a family who lives next door to you, Captain Molyneux and his wife; and I will venture to say that no more dangerous and unsuitable companion could be found for a young girl. I have hinted this often to your father, and to herself, but it is a very delicate matter, as you must know; and, indeed, my well-meant endeavours have already caused me to perceive that they were unwelcome; but I am sure you will give me credit for good intentions, as the matter is really very serious.

Katey's hand here went to her side. She had had, indeed, forebodings of this terrible trouble. What *did* it mean? She read on:

The truth is this—Molyneux, who is as ungentlemanly as he is dissolute, has been boasting of the influence he has over your sister, and, I understand, has actually made her the subject of a very heavy wager, which depends upon a fixed date. Again you must forgive my approaching this matter, but it is really necessary that some step be taken, and at once. I hear that there is to be a dinner and ball given to-night at Westcup, by some rather doubtful people, to which Molyneux insists on bringing his wife and your sister. From something I have heard from a friend of his, I believe that he will seize this opportunity to compromise your sister in some way. She has had a quarrel with your father, and might, through her resentment, fall into the trap. I have thought it right to give you this warning in preference to Doctor Findlater, who might naturally be inclined to take up the matter too seriously, and turn it into a scandal. I know you will forgive my freedom; but there is no time to be lost.

I am, yours sincerely,
CHARLES MONTAGUE.

Agitated, miserable, at this unexpected news, Katey faltered; the letter dropped from her fingers. What *was* she to do? She had her duties here; there was Peter, she dared not consult him. There would be, indeed, according to his favourite phrase, "wigs," not merely "on the green," but kicked into the air, flung over the wall, and disposed of in every violent way. The best course clearly was to hurry into the little town, see Polly, detain her, forcibly, if necessary, and tell Peter in the morning.

This was no sooner thought of than it was done. In a moment she had got her things, had stolen out by the green-house, and was hurrying through the gardens, then across the fields to Tilston. It was already dark as she hurried along—it was not more than a quarter of an hour's walk. It was then that, for the first time for many weeks, she had an opportunity of considering her strange position, and how, within so short a time, they had been involved in all this struggling, and battling, and agitation. One little gleam of grace had come in Mrs. Leader's generous advance; but here was this poor child, Polly, wayward and foolish, and with no one now that had the art of leading her gently, or thus managing her. But she determined, as soon as she herself was in some independent situation, Polly should come to her, and be married to some firm, steady, kindly man, who would control her, and make her happy.

Here was the Doctor's house at last. Their old man-servant stared as he opened the door, to see her arriving in such a fashion. But the hall was all dark.

"Where is Miss Polly?"

"Gone next door to the captain and his wife, where, between ourselves, Miss Katey, it would be better for her mind and heart had she not gone. Ah! an ill-mannered fellow, and no gentleman."

Katey felt her heart sink: not so much from this news as from the difficulty of knowing how to act. What could she do? "Run in," she said, "quick, and ask her to come here."

"Come in! Oh! isn't she off on a gallivant to the town yonder? Ah! it's a disgrace on the Doctor; and with a chap of that sort, who's no real gentleman."

"But I must see her—I want her—we must find her!" said Katey, distractedly. "Go in, do, and ask where they are gone, when they are to be back. Find out everything."

The old man went in, and presently re-

turned without news, only bringing with him the address of the house in Westcup, where the party was being given. Katey thought a moment, then decided on sacrificing everything to the interest of this precious jewel. She hurried back to the Fort, there quietly ordered out a little brougham, as if to drive into Tilston. Just as she was going down, she met her father.

"Here, where have you been?" he said, testily. "We've been hunting for you everywhere. Go up and attend on him."

"But how is he?" she asked, eagerly.

"Oh, better—better, I think," said the Doctor, angrily. "It's all a false cry, I believe. The man'll be as well as any of us."

This was a relief; now she felt less scruple. Making some excuse, she escaped from him, got round to the back of the house, and in a few moments was driving away to Tilston.

That was a dreary, blank journey indeed. Never had Katey in her whole life been in such a terrible crisis; and when she was half-way, for the first time there flashed upon her the strange misconstruction that might be placed upon her absence. How was she to account for it? Fortunate it was that Mrs. Leader had shown such generosity in reconciliation; she would not now take any advantage of this absence, as Mr. Leader was recovering. Still, what was she to say? how was she to explain such an expedition? Yes; Peter would help. She would tell him; his cleverness would devise something.

As she reached Tilston she thought for a moment what she was to do next, before starting on what would be a good hour and a half's drive, and on so wild and uncertain an expedition. What was she to do—whither was she to go? If she had only some one to advise with—to consult. Ah, that Captain Montague, "prig" as he was, was good-natured and sincere. It would be no harm to consult him. In a moment she was at the barracks, and had sent up for him. He came to her at once.

"I knew you would not misunderstand me," he said; "and, indeed, since I wrote, I have heard what has more than confirmed my fears. Even at the mess-table, which I have just left, it is known that he has made this boast—this blackguard boast, as I call it—and has found that Hickey to take up his wager. He says that this very night he will so compromise your sister that——"

"What *am* I to do?" cried Katey, in despair. "It is too late now——"

"Not at all," he said, gravely, "if you have spirit and courage for the undertaking. And if you will let me aid you——"

"If you only would," said she.

"Nothing easier," he said. "One of our men is going, and I can get him to take me. I will meet you at Westcup. Perhaps you may even find her at the hotel before they have left. If so, all will be well. I can manage, and you can manage. If they have gone to the ball, why, still I can follow."

"This is indeed kind of you," said she; "but it will take such a time, and they expect me at home."

"Not at all. An hour's sharp driving will do it. I shall be there before you. Drive to the Red Lion. Don't forget the name. I shall meet you there."

He was gone, and in a few moments Mr. Leader's brougham-horse was rattling over the roads to Westcup.

RAIDS OVER THE BORDER.

THE LAND OF SCOTT. PART III.

He who visits the Tweed must, if he be a true pilgrim, visit the Ettrick and the Yarrow, and the many intermingling streams of this beautiful corner of Scotland. The Yarrow more especially claims the tribute of the traveller who loves the picturesque in scenery, or the traditional in song; no longer, as Wordsworth said of it, "A river bare, flowing the dark hills under;" but a river with banks well planted with noble trees, and as sylvan and umbrageous as Dr. Samuel Johnson himself, who said there were no trees in Scotland, could have desired. There are few tragedies in Scottish legend more touching than that recorded in the quaint, but pathetic ballad, Busk ye, busk ye, my bonnie, bonnie Bride; the bride whose bridegroom met his untimely fate on the braes of Yarrow, at the hands of the lady's brothers, as sung by William Hamilton of Bangour, and afterwards in softer and almost equally impressive strains by John Logan, a Scottish poet, who wrote unfortunately too little, but who is known to many English readers by his delicious little poem to the Cuckoo. Wordsworth's two poems of Yarrow Unvisited, and Yarrow Revisited, the former more especially, have added new gems to the tiara which the nymph of the Yarrow might be privileged to wear if emerging from her "dens" no longer "dowie," she could appear to mortal eyes. But the whole land is enchanted. Turn where we will,

some memory confronts us — tender or heroic—or both in one: something that tells of "the unconquerable strength of love" and the all-pervading influences of sorrow. Wordsworth says:

> Be Yarrow stream unseen, unknown,
> It must, or we shall rue it,
> We have a vision of our own,
> And why should we undo it?

But no traveller of cultivated mind can undo the vision he may have formed of this river—rather of this rivulet. It is a weird stream; weird memories hover above and around it, and he who can recal them need never fear to rue his visit to the "dowie dens" or the "bonnie holms" of Yarrow.

The towns, and castles, and strongholds of this region are too many to be enumerated: but any traveller with spare time, and with Scott's and Wordsworth's poems, and the Border Minstrelsy, in his travelling-bag, need never be at a loss for indicators as to the places he should visit, or for information concerning them. But Newark Castle claims especial attention as the scene where the Last Minstrel sang his celebrated Lay to the pitying Duchess of Buccleuch, widow of James Duke of Monmouth, the luckless and handsome son of Charles the Second. Newark was built by James the Second of Scotland. Upon the marriage of James the Fourth with Margaret, daughter of Henry the Seventh, the Castle of Newark, with the whole of Ettrick Forest, including the greater part of Selkirkshire, was assigned to the lady as part of her jointure. It afterwards, partly by usurpation and partly by grant, passed into the possession of the Buccleuch family. Another great house in the neighbourhood, not, like Newark, a ruin, but in full preservation, and inhabited, is Philiphaugh; once the abode of a personage celebrated on the Scottish Border as the Outlaw Murray. The exploits of this doughty moss-trooper, and an adventure which he had with King James, by the result of which he ceased to be an outlaw, and became as honest a gentleman as any other Borderer (which is not saying much), are recorded in the Song of the Outlaw Murray, in Scott's Minstrelsy of the Border, where the Castle of Philiphaugh is described as built of stone and lime, and standing pleasantly. At a later period (1643), the battle of Philiphaugh, fought by the Marquis of Montrose against the Covenanters, gave the place additional celebrity in Scottish annals. At the fatal field of Philiphaugh, Montrose lost, says Scott, "in one defeat the fruit of six splendid victories, nor was he again able to make head in Scotland against the covenanted cause."

Leaving Yarrow and its memories, we return to the Tweed, and make our last pilgrimage in this lovely region to the ruins of Dryburgh Abbey, and the grave of Scott. The abbey was founded in the twelfth century, and if a judgment may be formed of its extent and beauty by its noble remains, it must have been one of the most magnificent ecclesiastical edifices in Scotland. After the Dissolution it became the property of the Haliburtons, and now belongs to the Earls of Buchan, who have a modern residence in near proximity. Were Dryburgh merely a fine ruin, with a history, it would attract many visitors; but as the burial-place of Sir Walter Scott, selected by himself, it has associations of still deeper interest. The tomb stands in St. Mary's aisle, and is a large, plain, massive structure, enclosed within a railing. I should have liked, had it been possible, to gather a wild-flower from that honoured grave; but no wild-flowers grow upon the plain stone, though many flourish and glitter among the ruins, adding their little graces and amenities to the decaying places in which they grow. Not being able to pluck flowers from the minstrel's grave, I did the next best thing in my power: I placed a posy of the brightest and freshest upon the tomb, and left Dryburgh with the feeling that in that spot of his own choice the venerated remains of Scott lay in a fit shrine. The whole ruin, indeed the whole Border Land, is his monument.

Retracing our steps to Edinburgh, we take the rail for Stirling and the lovely region of the Southern Highlands of Loch Katrine and Loch Lomond, as much the land of Scott as are the Border counties. Our first halting-place is Linlithgow, of which the name was always a puzzle to antiquaries, until the worthy Colonel Robertson, in his Gaelic Topography of Scotland, explained it as representing "the dark grey Linn Pool," from the Gaelic "Linne liath dhu." The dilapidated castle, which gives the place its whole interest, is beautiful in itself, and full of historic and legendary memories. In Sir David Lindesay's Tale, in Marmion, there occurs the passage:

> Of all the palaces so fair,
> Built for the royal dwelling,
> In Scotland, far beyond compare
> Linlithgow is excelling.

Lord Jeffrey described these lines as being evidently formed on the familiar model of

Sternhold and Hopkins. They certainly have the trick of those venerable masters of doggerel. But, as a modern Homer has undoubtedly as much right to a nap as his ancient predecessor, no more need be said on that subject. The palace is one of about twenty that once belonged to the old kings of Scotland—often richer in palaces than in faithful subjects. It first became a royal residence in the twelfth century, or at least is mentioned as early as the year 1126. In the year 1300, Edward the First took up his winter quarters at the Castle of Linlithgow, which he partly rebuilt and greatly extended. In 1302, according to Stowe, in his Annales of England, he kept his Christmas here (Stowe calls the place Litheke, which closely resembles the modern Scottish "Lithgow," the name which the railway officials call out when the train stops at the station). Here he maintained "a puissant armie," but, through "the earnest suit of Philip, King of France, whose sister he had lately married," adds Stowe, "he granted a truce with the Scots." The truce was not of long duration, and the English king—one of the very noblest of the Norman line—held the castle till his death. It was not finally delivered back to Scottish keeping till Bruce drove out the English, and secured the independence of Scotland at Bannockburn. Linlithgow Castle was the favourite residence of the Stuarts, where, in the few bright and peaceful years—it might almost be said weeks or days—allowed them by the ambition and the treason of the great and very turbulent Scottish nobles, who contested supreme authority with them, they held state and revel. James the Fourth and James the Fifth greatly extended the palace; and here Mary of Guise, queen of the last-mentioned king, gave birth, some years after the premature death of her two elder children, sons, to another Mary—the luckless Mary, afterwards Queen of Scots. Her father had set his heart upon another son to succeed to his perilous throne; a throne to be held against all pretenders, by dint of sword, as well as of cunning and statesmanship; and when he was informed of the birth of a daughter, his mind was filled with evil forebodings. "Is it even so?" he exclaimed to the messenger who brought the tidings; "then farewell to the glory of the House of Stuart—God's will be done! It came with a lass, and it will go with a lass." Queen Mary never knew a father's care, for the unhappy king died seven days after she was born. Queen Elizabeth of England, who would have been very well satisfied if James of Scotland had left neither heir nor heiress, more especially if either were of the religious faith of Mary of Guise, was informed by some of the people about the court—anxious, as sycophants are in all ages, to flatter the wishes and the prejudices of the powerful—that the babe was far too frail and sickly to live. Mary of Guise was indignant when she heard the rumour, and ordered the child to be unswaddled and exhibited in puris naturalibus before Sir Ralph Sadler, the English ambassador. Sir Ralph, who was himself a father and a judge of infant humanity, wrote to the Queen of England, for her information, "that the princess was as goodly a child as he had ever seen of her age," and very likely to live, and ascend the throne of Scotland.

When Mary grew to maturity, and after her return from France, in her young widowhood, she resided occasionally at Linlithgow, as she did once or twice after her ill-omened marriage with Lord Darnley. It was at Linlithgow that the Regent Murray, Mary's half-brother, was assassinated by Hamilton of Bothwellhaugh—an incident which occupies its fitting place in all the histories of Scotland, and which forms the groundwork of one of Sir Walter Scott's minor poems. If the full history of Linlithgow Castle were written, it would be a history of the House of Stuart for three hundred years—a task somewhat too elaborate and comprehensive for a traveller and sightseer—so we pass on, with proper respect to its venerable associations, not forgetting that the old poet, Sir David Lindesay of the Mount, bade farewell to it in the flattering words:

> Adieu, Lithgow! whose palace of plaisance
> Might be ane pattern to Portugal or France!

The ruin is maintained in ornamental order, and prevented from further decay and dilapidation by the Commissioners of Woods and Forests, though there are Scottish grumblers who stoutly maintain that if the Scottish members in Parliament did their duty by their country about these ruins, more money would be voted for this purpose than is now expended upon it.

From Linlithgow, all the way upon historic ground, we pass on to Falkirk, whose tall spire stands like a landmark to the north of the line of rail at the head of the Firth of Forth. Falkirk, like every other Scottish town of a hundred years old and upwards, is famous in history for the

battles fought in its neighbourhood, either by the Scotch against the English, or by the Scotch among themselves. But the most memorable battle ever fought at Falkirk was that in which Wallace was defeated by Edward the First, which is quaintly recorded by Stowe in his Annales:

"King Edward," says the annalist, "wanne the battell of Faulkirke in Scotland, upon Saint Mary Magdalens daie, in which battell was slaine more than twentie thousande Scots, and William Walleis their captaine fled. Anthony Beke, Bishop of Duresme, had at this battell such a retinue, that in his companie were two and thirtie banners." It would appear that King Edward's victory caused great rejoicing among his own people. "The citizens of London," Stowe adds, "hearing of the great victorie obtained by the King of England against the Scottes, made great and solemne triumph in their citie, everie one according to their craft, especiallie the fishmongers, which with solemne procession passed through the citie, having, amongst other Pageantes and Shewes, foure Sturgeons gilded, carried on foure horses; then foure Salmons of silver on foure horses; and after sixe and fourtie knights armed, riding on horses, made like Luces of the Sea; and then Saint Magnus with a thousand horsemen; this they did on Saint Magnus daie, in honour of the kinges great victorie, and safe returne." The Scots, however, had a full revenge at Bannockburn, not very long afterwards.

Modern Falkirk is a pleasant town, and, like Ayr, is noted for honest (and hard-drinking) men, and bonnie lasses; but its chief claims to remembrance, in our day, are its annual "trystes," or cattle markets, where more oxen and sheep are gathered together in one day than in any other town or city of the British empire, or perhaps of the world. A worthy Highlander, lately gone to his rest, who in his day was the greatest sheep farmer and cattle breeder in the North, was accustomed at the Falkirk trystes, over his toddy in the evening, to hold forth to a sympathetic auditory in his favourite public-house, or "howff," on the great dignity of his calling. He asserted that to drive large flocks of sheep safely from the Highlands to the Lowlands, was a work both of statesmanship and generalship, that entitled the performer thereof to a high place among the worthies of his country. "Talk of the Duke of Wellington," he said; "na doot he was a great man, a vera great man; and managed a few thousand troops weel eneuch at Waterloo: but could he ha'e driven a hundred thousand sheep from Sntherlandshire, and put them safely, without the loss of ane o' them, into the Falkirk tryste? No! my certies. That's a job that wad ha'e been ower tough for him. He could na ha'e done it, sir, he could na."

Beyond Falkirk, on the road to Stirling, are some remains of the Torwood, celebrated as the place where Donald Cargill, the sturdy Covenanter, launched his anathemas against and excommunicated the king, the episcopate, and all who sought to introduce episcopacy into Scotland against the will of the people. For this, among many minor acts, all done for conscience sake, and for a sincere adherence to truth and duty, as he understood them, the brave and eloquent Cargill died a felon's death at Edinburgh, leaving behind him a great name, as one of the noblest of the long roll of Scottish martyrs in the cause of religious liberty. Passing many places of which the names are more or less suggestive of incidents and episodes of the dark and troublous days of Scottish history, we come gradually in sight of Stirling Castle, next to that of Edinburgh, which it greatly resembles, the most picturesque and imposing fortress in Scotland. Stirling is in the very heart of the country, and from its esplanade the stranger may survey the glorious panorama of the Highland hills on the one side, and the rich fields and carses of the Lowlands on the other. Looking from the castle over the long level through which the Forth winds its lazy way to the ocean, it is difficult not to believe that all this low-lying and rich ground was not in some remote period a sea-bottom, when the firth, or estuary, extended from Airth and Alloa upwards as far as the Rock of Stirling, and when the waves of the ocean rolled over the sites where now stand many hundreds of populous villages and towns, and many venerable ruins of abbeys and palaces renowned in song and story.

Stirling is a very ancient town, and even more than Edinburgh was the courtly capital of Scotland; from the days of Robert Bruce to those of James the Fifth its castle was alike famous for love and war, festivity and treachery, with dark deeds to which justice and history might give the harshest epithets that language can employ. Here James the First, the amiable

author of the King's Quair, passed his happiest days, with his beautiful English wife. Here James the Second cruelly murdered the Black Douglas, as will be mentioned more particularly hereafter. Here James the Third loved to dwell, and expended large sums in extending and ornamenting the place. From this castle James the Fourth set out on the fatal expedition to Flodden. All the readers of Sir Walter Scott's Lady of the Lake, if not his best, his most popular poem, are familiar with Stirling, once, though nobody knows when, called Snowdoun, and with the adventures of the chivalrous James the Fifth, as there recorded. James the Knight of Snowdoun, James the Gudeman of Ballengeich, James the Gaberlunzie-man, is to this day one of the most popular members of this illustrious and unlucky house, and the poets and romancers seem never to have tired of recording his adventures of love or war, or of his mere frolics of exuberant animal spirits. Here his daughter Mary passed her infancy, and here, while she was yet a romping wee lassie, though she had been solemnly crowned as queen when less than nine months old, a treaty was entered into between her guardians and the ambassador of Henry the Eighth of England, by which Mary was, when ten years of age, to be sent to England to complete her education, and to be in due time married to Prince Edward, the bluff king's son, afterwards Edward the Sixth of England. How different the history both of England and Scotland might have been, had this marriage been accomplished! The world might have heard nothing of "bloody Mary," or "good Queen Bess," and the quiet, domestic history of poor Mary might have pointed no moral, and adorned no tale for the warning of posterity. But she was fated to wed, not the good and wise Edward, but the foolish and cruel Darnley, and in Stirling Castle the son of that ill-starred marriage received his early education at the hands of the learned Buchanan, whose teachings were more of a kind to make his pupil an industrious man of letters than the king of an unruly people.

But the one great event in the history of Stirling and its castle, overshadowing all others in the heart of every true Scotsman from that day to this, a period of five hundred and fifty-six years, is the battle of Bannockburn, fought almost within arrow-shot of its walls. Falkirk would have been a bitter memory to the Scotch if its disaster had not been wiped out by Bannockburn; and Flodden, more disastrous still, would have been a name of evil augury had not the flower of English chivalry been laid low by the victorious Bruce under the walls of Stirling Castle. The battle has never been better described than by Robert Paston, a contemporary writer and monk of the Carmelite order, quoted by Stowe. The English host numbered one hundred thousand men, and the Scottish but thirty thousand. The English were led by an inefficient and unskilful general, the Scotch by a consummate master of the art of war. The English fought for conquest and dominion; the Scottish for liberty and independence of a foreign yoke. The English were on an alien soil, surrounded by enemies; the Scotch were on their own soil, and all the men and women, and even the small lads and lasses, were their friends and auxiliaries. Stirling Castle had been held by the English ever since the defeat of Wallace at Falkirk, and Edward the Second heard that an attempt was to be made by Robert Bruce to recapture it. The English king immediately made great efforts, not alone to prevent this catastrophe, but to maintain English ascendancy in Scotland. "Never before," says Paston, "was seen the like preparation, pride, and cost in the time of war." Paston was present at the battle, and was taken prisoner by the Scotch, which event, says Stowe, "he sorrowfully bewailed in heroical verse" The English host took up a position near the village of St. Ninian's, between which place and the Scottish position, near Bannockburn, was a soft swampy morass, unfit for the passage of cavalry. This treacherous ground was carefully prepared by the Scotch, and with a success which, as regards the English, was only too tremendous. "The first night," says Paston, "ye might have seen the Englishmen bathing themselves in wine, and casting their gorgets; there was crying, shouting, wassailing, and drinking, with other rioting far above measure. On the other side we might have seen the Scottes quiet, stille, and close, fasting the even of St. John the Baptiste, laboring in love of the liberties of their countrie. On the morrow the Scottes, having gotten the most convenient place in the fielde for victorie, made ditches in the ground three feete deepe, and the like in breadth, from the right wing of the army unto the left, covering the same with weak twygges and hurdles, and again over with turfe and grasse, which was not of the strength to bear horsemen." The ruse de guerre was utterly unsuspected by the

English cavalry, which charging impetuously, tumbled pell-mell into the trenches, where they fell an easy prey to their opponents. A panic after awhile seized the English army, which was increased at the most critical moment of the fray by the sudden appearance of what appeared a large Scottish reinforcement, but which was no other than a great assemblage of camp-followers and non-combatants, blowing trumpets and waving scarfs and articles of attire as banners, and presenting, as they advanced on the already discomfited hosts of Edward, the appearance of a strong auxiliary army. The rout was complete, the English left upwards of twenty thousand dead upon the field and prisoners in the hands of the enemy, and the king, setting spurs to his horse, endeavoured to gain admission to Stirling Castle. He was informed that the place could not hold out, and advised to seek safety elsewhere. Ultimately, and with great difficulty, he made his way along the shores of the Firth of Forth beyond Edinburgh to Dunbar, where, after lying concealed in the friendly castle of Gospatrick, Earl of March, for a few days, he escaped by sea to his own country. Scott has described this battle in imperishable verse, and even to this day, when all animosity between Englishmen and Scotsmen has happily passed away, and the two are one people, with only such slight differences of character and idiosyncrasy as to show that they are not twins, though excellent good friends and brothers, this story of the battle is never recited in Scottish ears without exciting a thrill of patriotic emotion. The battle was a fortunate accident, or a happy achievement, I do not care which it may be called, both for the Scotch and the English. It prevented the English from vaunting themselves too much; and it prevented the Scotch from considering themselves too hopelessly the inferiors of the more numerous and powerful English. Not but that the Scotch were somewhat vainglorious on the subject; but if they be, the little trait of character may be pardoned for the patriotic spirit that underlies it. "There never was a Scotchman," said an insolent cockney at Stirling to a worthy Scot, who was acting as guide to the castle, "who did not want to get out of Scotland almost as soon as he had got into it." "That such may be the fack, I'll no gainsay," replied the Scot. "There were about twenty thousand o' your countrymen, and mair, wha wanted to get out of Scotland on the day of Bannockburn. But they could na' win. And they're laying at Bannockburn the noo; and have never been able to get out o' Scotland yet." Bannockburn is always the set-off to Flodden in popular estimation, and without it Flodden would be a sore subject. "So you are going to England to practise surgery," said a Scottish lawyer to a client, who had been a cow-doctor; "but have you skill enough for your new profession?" "Hoots! aye! plenty o' skill!" "But are you not afraid ye may sometimes kill your patients, if you do not study medicine for awhile as your proper profession?" "Nae fear! and if I do kill a few o' the Southrons, it will take a great deal o' killing to mak up for Flodden!"

The view from Stirling Castle impresses all beholders with its variety and beauty, including, as it does, not only the field of Bannockburn, the Abbey Crag, on which a monument in memory of William Wallace has of late years been erected, which stands as a landmark, visible in every direction for many miles around; but the beautiful woods of Kier, the fashionable watering place, the Bridge of Allan, the majestic ruins of the Abbey of Cambuskenneth, and the sinuous river that—issuing from the highest hills beyond Callander—assumes the names, ere it reaches Stirling, of the Avondhu and the Forth. And the interior of the castle is as greatly worthy of a long visit from every intelligent and well-read traveller as the exterior. In the banqueting-hall, the kings of the houses of Bruce and of Stuart, and even of an earlier time, were accustomed to hold the Round Table, supposed to have been originally established by King Arthur, though no record states when that fabulous monarch inhabited Scotland. The old Parliament House, in which the Estates of the realm met under the Stuarts, is now used as a barrack for the garrison. Almost, if not every, room of the palace and castle has its own little bit of romance and tradition; but that which excites the greatest interest among the multitude—for the same reason that makes the Chamber of Horrors at Madame Tussaud's so attractive—is the little bedroom of King James the Second, where a very ghastly tragedy was enacted, ghastly alike in its first act as in its climax and catastrophe. William, the eighth Earl of Douglas, haughtiest and savagest among the haughty and savage Scottish nobles of his time, carried things with somewhat too high a hand in the south of Scotland, and in his own extensive domain, to be considered either a peaceable, a safe, or a loyal subject, by his king. Douglas had seized and imprisoned one

M'Clellan, of Bombie, and threatened to bring him to trial and execution by virtue of his feudal jurisdiction and authority. Sir Patrick Grey, commander of the king's body-guard, and uncle of M'Clellan, obtained from James the Second at Stirling a warrant for the delivery of the prisoner. On Grey's arrival at Douglas's Castle of Thrave, Douglas, suspecting his errand, invited him to dine, with the remark that it was "ill-talking between a full man and a fasting." Grey accepted the invitation, and, in the meanwhile, the unfortunate M'Clellan was, by the grim earl's orders, led out into the court-yard and summarily beheaded. After dinner Grey proceeded to business, and presented the king's warrant. "You are too late, Sir Patrick!" said Douglas. "Your sister's son lies in the court, without his head. *That* I cannot spare you,, but you are welcome to the dead body." Grey sprang suddenly to his steed, and vowing revenge for the cruel and dastardly outrage, rode off, pursued by some of Douglas's men until within a few miles of Edinburgh. He lived to be revenged, and in a manner which he could not have anticipated. The king was highly incensed, not only at the murder, which was but the climax of many other atrocities, but at the confederacy into which Douglas had entered with the Earls of Crawford, Ross, Moray, and other great nobles, against his crown and authority. But Douglas was too powerful a person to be lightly assailed; and at a loyal council it was resolved to offer him an amnesty for all past offences, if he would renew his oath of allegiance, and break off his connexion with the confederacy. For this purpose he was invited to visit the king at Stirling, with promises of a hospitable and a friendly reception, and provided with a writ of safe-conduct. Douglas was strongly dissuaded by his friends against trusting in the king's word, but, confiding in the writ, he set forth, attended by his trustiest clansmen and several hundred retainers, all well mounted and armed, and arrived at Stirling, on the 20th of February, 1451. His followers were lodged in the town, and himself and nearest kinsmen, to the number of about twenty, in the castle. Everything went on smoothly and quietly between the king and his powerful subject. They dined and drank together, sat, and walked, and conversed amicably, always avoiding, however, the main subject at issue between them. On the second day the king gave a great state banquet to the council, at which, after the removal of the cloth, the matter of the confederacy, of which Douglas was supposed to be the head and the heart, was brought forward and discussed. The discussion grew warm, and being shared by too many disputants, the king suddenly asked Douglas to retire with him into an adjoining room—a bedroom—to discourse with him privately. Here the king endeavoured to persuade him to return to his allegiance, and to break the bond into which he had entered with the disaffected nobles. Douglas defended himself quietly against some of the charges made against him; alleged his feudal right to punish his enemies within his own jurisdiction; and as regarded his bond or compact with Crawford and other nobles, maintained that he had as much right to make compacts as the king himself. The king lost his temper, and in a fit of rage drew his dagger, and exclaimed, "Traitor! if thou wilt not break the bond, my dagger shall," and stabbed him to the heart. Douglas attempted to return the blow, but in vain. The lords of the council, hearing the scuffle, rushed in, all armed, and Douglas fell to the ground, stabbed in twenty-six places, the finishing blow being given by Sir Patrick Grey, who smashed in his head with a pole-axe. This done, the body was thrown out of the little bedroom window into the court below, where it was immediately buried. This room was almost wholly destroyed by fire a few years ago, but has been restored in the exact style of the original. In 1797, a skeleton of a man was found in the spot indicated by tradition as that in which Douglas was buried.

Another room in Stirling Castle, which has associations of a pleasanter character, is that which was the study of James the Sixth, when a child, under the tutorship of the celebrated Buchanan. It was here that the future king of Great Britain and Ireland clomb painfully up the hill of knowledge, and that when he was remiss, or idle, or stupid, which often happened, a scapegoat was found for his offences in the shape of a little boy of his own age, who received the whippings that ought of right to have been administered to the royal offender. It is related that Buchanan, losing faith in this vicarious method of punishment, one day, when he was more than usually aggravated by the inattention or stupidity of his pupil, administered the treatment to his royal pupil himself with a force and decisiveness which made the young king roar as lustily as if he had been a small Etonian, or a parochial charity boy, undergoing the same penance. The

king's governess, the Countess of Mar, rushed into the room with fury in her eyes, and seizing James from his castigator, asked the schoolmaster savagely, "How he dared to lay his hands on the Lord's anointed?" Buchanan's reply has been duly preserved for the laughter of posterity, but does not exactly suit the decorum of these papers, or of modern parlance.

> Adieu, fair Snowdoun, with thy touris high,
> Thy Chapel Royal, Park, and Table Round,
> May, June, and July would I dwell in thee!

Repeating these lines from old Sir David Lindesay of the Mount, we leave Stirling Castle, and take the road for Callander and the Trosachs.

MY TOY.

I MADE the plaything myself you see,
I limned it in colours fair,
I gave to the eye its loving depth,
I smoothed its sheeny hair.

All for the sake of a false sweet word,
By the light of a smile repaid,
I decked my idol in beautiful guise,
And knelt at the shrine I had made.

My tranquil days, my dreamless nights,
I laid at my darling's feet;
I said no other hand was strong,
No other voice was sweet.

The old beliefs, the world's set laws,
I broke them one by one,
And turned to my false god's smile to praise
The ruin I had done.

Slowly, and surely, and fatally
The glory dimmed away;
I knew my dream was nothingness,
I knew my gold was clay.

Yet half in love, despairing half,
To the altar steps I clung,
Who else but I knew what costly freight
To our frail cable hung?

But the clasping hands grew tired out.
The jar, the chill, the strain!
No love could smooth—no faith could mend.
The last strand snapped in twain.

Free, free, and, oh, so lonely,
By the empty shrine I stand,
And pity my own unglamoured sight,
And pity my bleeding hand.

For, oh, with awakened power they ache,
The eyes that too clearly see,
And I think the scars on the fingers left
Will never be healed for me.

IN THE FIELD WITH THE PRUSSIANS.

"REQUISITIONING."

THE Germans as a rule, but the Bavarians in particular, revel in this word just at present. What is a "requisition?" It is evidently derived from the verb "to require." Now to require is to order a thing to be given—in fact, a German requisition is a pretty way of borrowing without payment, or, in other words, of stealing. "Convey, the wise it call." To give an example. A clever Bavarian will go to a French maire with a slip of paper, signed by his commander, in which it is stated that the bearer of the paper wants a horse and cart. The maire refers the Bavarian to some unfortunate villager who is luckless enough to possess such luxuries. The Bavarian taps at the door. The villager opens it. The Bavarian presents the slip of paper with the maire's signature. The villager's face falls, the Bavarian's becomes proportionately beaming. "Ah, monsieur!" says the Frenchman, "this is my only horse." The Bavarian shrugs his shoulders, not understanding a single word. The Frenchman continues his palaver. The Bavarian shrugs his shoulders again, and mutters. The Frenchman gets frantic, and gesticulates wildly. The Bavarian gets cross, and begins to swear. At last, seeing that gentle persuasion avails not, the Bavarian lowers his bayonet, and pronounces the two words, "Vorwärts!" "Marsch!" Now the Frenchman just understands these two words, and, with the additional persuasion of the lowered bayonet, he is not long in bringing forth his cart and horse. The Bavarian mounts, having previously, before the Frenchman's eyes, cut a stick, as thick as his brawny arm can wield, which he does very deliberately, as he is annoyed, in all probability, with the apparent disinclination of the Frenchman to let him have his cart. The poor Frenchman raises his eyes to heaven, mentally noting the thickness of the Bavarian's whip, and wondering what effect it will have on his luckless horse's flanks. The Bavarian does not leave him long in doubt; whack, down comes the stick; the horse commences a trot; the Bavarian is master of the situation; his rugged nature is thoroughly thawed, and he turns round to look at his friend. "Bon jour, monsieur!" he says, in a most annoyingly chuckling manner. The Frenchman does not return the adieu in an equally jocular way. "Monsieur, au revoir!" he says, sedately, as he stands with his hands in his pockets, looking the picture of impotent rage. Ah! he hopes to see his cart and horse the next day; of course he expects to find his horse tired to death and his cart damaged; but let us follow the cart and horse, and see what happens to them. The Bavarian, not content with the horse trotting, makes the poor brute break into a gallop, which continually increases, until he gets up to the Bavarian corps. Immediately the rear rank catches sight of the cart, with a comrade inside, it runs through

the ranks, "The cart is coming!" It reaches the captain's ears; he turns in his saddle, and commands his company to halt. The men have been tramping for several hours along a dusty road, and as the cart comes up a sigh of relief is heard all round as the shoulder-strap of the knapsack is unbuckled, and the heavy, cumbersome weight is slung into the cart. Fifty knapsacks are now in it; the crowd round the cart is thicker than ever; two men are stacking the pile, which still increases. At last the Frenchman's horse totters on its hoofs, being almost taken off its legs by the weight; so, not to be beaten, and to keep the equilibrium, a fat Bavarian gets on the poor beast's back, and the company proceeds. After a weary day's work the Frenchman's horse and cart arrive at the Bavarian bivouac; here, if there are any oats or hay to be "required," the horse gets a feed; if not, he may nibble a little grass, or a few leaves, and he proceeds the next morning with the Bavarian knapsacks, plus the fat Bavarian, as before. At night, again, the unfortunate beast stops in the pouring rain, attached to a tree. He gets some oats, and starts for a third day's march, as before. Suddenly the company comes to a halt. A battery of artillery in front has lost a horse from fatigue. A new horse must be forthcoming. The captain orders his company to shoulder their knapsacks once more. They don't do it very willingly, but the order is soon obeyed. The fat Bavarian slowly descends, the horse is taken out of the cart, the cart is left by the roadside, and the French horse, accustomed to the cart or plough, is suddenly converted into a Prussian artillery horse. Here the French peasant's chance of getting his horse back ends. The animal now gets well fed and groomed, has a dapper Prussian, with his burnished helmet, instead of the poor French peasant, as its master. Such is the end of a Bavarian requisition in many instances.

Wherever the Bavarians come they sweep the place clean of everything. They remind me always of a visitation of locusts. One meets them on the road to Paris with a couple of champagne bottles slung at each side. If one goes south, there are more Bavarians: if one goes north, there they are again. As for their constitutions and powers of endurance, they resemble bears more than human beings. I saw a Prussian and a Bavarian bivouac near together, one bitterly cold night, before Paris. It was so wretchedly cold that, despite the bivouac fires, the Prussians were running about to keep themselves warm; the Bavarians, on the other hand, were lying on the ground, and looked, from the way they slept and snored, as if they would never wake again, showing that they, at any rate, were not much affected by the cold.

I myself once or twice made a requisition, and one of these was the funniest adventure in which I ever participated. It was a fine day in the middle of October, and La Belle France, though at war, still looked charming; the sky was blue, and the atmosphere serene and beautiful. I had been intrusted by a Prussian dignitary, near Paris, with a special mission, which, although it had little or no military interest, was exciting enough because it had to be carried out amid such stirring scenes as war alone can produce. As I jumped into my saddle, an officer in Brunswick uniform, in fact, a Black Brunswicker, dashed up to my side; he was an acquaintance of mine, and we had met before at a mutual friend's bivouac fire.

"Whither away so early?" was his question.

"To Trilpont," was my answer.

"You'll find the bridges all blown away!"

"If I do not find Prussian pontoon bridges already in their places I shall be very much surprised," I said; "and shall have to make my horse pass the Seine, as I am bound for the other side."

"Ah, yes, they may have finished a bridge by now, certainly," was his rejoinder. "I have nothing to do for a couple of hours, will you take me for a companion de voyage?"

"Most willingly," was my answer, so on we rode together. Our route took us along a straight chaussée, with a double row of young lime-trees. It was early morning; the telegraph wires along the route had been cut and hung in festoons, which gave an air of dreariness and desolation to the chaussée itself. Every now and then we would come to a little wooden bridge, which the poor Frenchmen had cut or blown up, hoping thereby to impede a little the progress of the victorious German army; a hope that has always been signally disappointed. The actual German army does not arrive at these little bridges until long after their pioneers have completed new ones. Great bridges, and great tunnels, have, as a rule, been spared, while little bridges have been blown up; or, what has been still more foolish and futile, wherever

there has been a bit of paved road, the French seemed to have set to work to unpave twenty yards or so, or, if there be no pavement, to have dug little holes here and there in it. Now there are some troops in the German army who have greatly distinguished themselves in this campaign, and none more so than the impudent Uhlans, as they are called by their countrymen. These Uhlans, or Lancers, being light cavalry, scour the country days before the actual army comes through it. Now Uhlans naturally find a dug-up road uncomfortable for their horses to amble over, so they go at once to the nearest village, and drive every single man, woman, and child out of it to mend the road, and stand round them with lowered lances until the work is done. If a Frenchman murmurs at having to work for the enemy, he gets one of two sentences from the Uhlan thrown in his teeth; one is, "C'est à la guerre comme à la guerre," or, "C'est la guerre, mais la guerre est très-triste," these being the Uhlan's pet sentences. Well, we passed many a newly constructed little wooden bridge, and many a little patch of paving-stones newly laid down, and arrived at Trilpont at last.

Here a sight greeted us which we did not expect to find. The French had really done something in the way of stopping the Germans' progress. Of two large stone bridges, one, a railway bridge, had lost both its arches; the other, for passenger traffic, had lost but one. The mighty blocks of stone were lying in heaps, and the waters of the blue Seine were foaming over them, making cascades and whirlpools; they were grand ruins. My companion's words were, "schwere noth." Yes, it must indeed have been a "dreadful necessity" to have caused the Frenchmen to commit such frightful devastation against their own beautiful bridges. There was a pontoon bridge, and a German sentry at each end, to keep the pontoon boats from being too heavily laden by traffic; only one cart was allowed to pass at a time.

Here my companion turned his horse's head back again, and I continued my journey. I rode quickly along, for the little town was some way off. At last I arrived. My mission was to take some twenty wounded from a house they were in, and bring them to the hospital prepared for them, which I had just left. On my arrival, I presented my card to the chief man in the town, who was the maire and notary as well, and told him my mission. He said he would speak to the doctor of the place, and that they would see if they could manage it the next day for me; but of course they must have a debate about it first.

Now I was very loth to wait till this good Frenchman had got a sufficient number of his countrymen together, and had time to name a president, &c., and as it was but eleven o'clock, I felt very much inclined to get back by night to the place from which I had started. I therefore merely bowed to the maire's decision and left. I remounted my black horse, and rode to the nearest Prussian bivouac, which I had previously passed; here I found a company of Uhlans. I dismounted, and touching my cap to the officer, I asked him if he would give me a couple of Uhlans to help me make some requisitions; at the same time I showed him what my errand was. He was a delightful fellow; he had as handsome a face and figure as could be desired; his little black moustache was twisted fiercely upward, and he looked a thorough soldier from top to toe.

"Ah, you are English!" he said. "My dear mother is English, so we must shake hands. Come, sit down, and we will have breakfast together. Karlofski, bring us something to eat, and tell unter offizier Kummer I want him."

The under officer made his appearance.

"Tell off two men for requisitions. Let them have their horses saddled directly."

Karlofski now made his appearance with some sausage and bread, and a bottle of wine, old Burgundy.

"Ah!" said my companion, "I have a treat for you in this wine. I 'required' it yesterday at a gentleman's château. The butler, of course, said he had nothing; but we have not been in France for ten weeks without knowing that a French 'no,' and a German 'yes,' mean something about the same thing, so I said to him, my friend, let me look into your cellar. The butler, who was very obsequious, complacently lit a candle and showed me into a vault. The vault certainly had as clean a conscience of having anything to drink in it as I at that moment had, but I noticed a peculiar look the good butler gave at an apparently newly built wall, so calling out for Karlofski, I told him to bring something to knock a wall down with. To make a long story short, we found as good a stock of wine in this soi-disant empty cellar as any of us have ever tasted; and this is part of the contents," he added, as he held up to the light a bumper of Burgundy.

After we had finished the repast, and had taken down one another's names and addresses, and had exchanged eternal vows of friendship, I remounted my horse, and, with the two Uhlans at my side, started to make my first requisition.

It was a glorious trot we had before we arrived at a village some eight miles off. As the women and children saw us they ran into their houses; they don't like the look of those long lances with the dirty little black and white flag. The few men who were lounging about cast glances of the bitterest hate at us. The Uhlans take no notice of sour looks, except now and then they give a little derisive laugh. I now tapped with the handle of my riding-whip at a villager's door. A thin, sour-looking Frenchman came to answer my summons.

"My friend," I said, "I have come to require your horse and cart, to transport some wounded from the houses they are now in to a military hospital."

"Monsieur," said the Frenchman wringing his hands, "je n'ai rien de tout, de tout, de tout; the Prussians have stolen all that I had."

I repeated this to the Uhlans.

"Ach! herr, never believe a Frenchman," said one of the Uhlans.

Thereupon I insisted on having the key of the outhouse in order to look for myself, but my Frenchman declined to let me have it. So I gave a Uhlan the order to break the door open. There was a cart; and, in going through a door, I found two horses quietly munching oats. I left the Uhlans to see the harnessing done to their satisfaction, and went back to the house to tell the man that, although no doubt he did not know it, a stray cart and two horses had singularly enough found their way into his stables. He received this piece of good news in gloomy silence. I said, "Should you wish these strange horses to come back into your stables to-morrow, you will either drive them to the place I want them to go to yourself, or you will send some one with them, for you may rest assured your friends the Uhlans won't trouble themselves about seeing that you get the cart and animals back." The Frenchman saw the justice of my remark, called a hump-backed son, and told him to drive the cart where the brigands wanted it, and then slammed the door in my face. I took no notice. The poor French have enough to try them.

I had made a beginning. I then went to the next most likely person in the village, and tapped at his door.

"Well, monsieur," I said, as he opened it, "I suppose at this juncture of affairs you, like all other Frenchmen, have got rien de tout, de tout, de tout."

Now the Frenchman seemed highly delighted at finding a foreigner use the very words that he meant to have used himself, and he repeated them slowly and deliberately.

I suggested, "Not even a cart and horse?"

He raised his eyes to heaven, "Mais non, monsieur! Les Prussiens!"

Unluckily for him, just at that moment his horse in the barn neighed, and prevented him adding the other half of what might be termed a slight perversion of the truth. He forthwith drew the bolt of his stable-door, and, as if he had expected our coming, there was a horse, and also a cart, quite ready, with a sack of oats inside it. That grain the owner wanted to remove, but a Uhlan assured him it was not necessary.

A third cart was given in such a different spirit that I must certainly record the fact. A poor old peasant, with white hair, was standing by his door, when I asked him if he could let me have his cart to transport some wounded.

"Certainly, sir. Ah, les pauvres blessés, les pauvre blessés! This is a frightful war, sir. Shall I drive the cart myself?"

I said, "Have you no son?"

"Yes, sir, I have two; but they are Francs-tireurs, and I almost think they must be dead now, sir. One did say he meant to join the army of Lyons; but since they left home, after the news of the battle of Sedan, I have not heard a word of them."

I said, "Can you stay out from home till noon to-morrow?"

"Yes, sir. I must tell my wife, though, and put on my great-coat."

I now had three carts, and at the next village I got four more, and then started to fetch the wounded.

It was now past one, and I had a long way to go; however, at four I reached the little town, and having straw put into each cart, the wounded were, one after another, brought out, and placed on it. How thankful the poor fellows were to get away from that fever-stricken town! They gulped down the fresh air, and seemed to think that their recovery was certain now.

The carts had all their allowance of

wounded, so I told one Uhlan to head the cavalcade, and the other to bring up the rear. I rode on ahead to find the good maire. Just as I turned the corner I met that very individual. I drew up by his side, and entered into conversation with him. He told me, with great impressment, that he would soon be in a position to help me "evacuate" my wounded, and that, as he must be away the next day, he had asked some one to be president of the meeting, and they would, no doubt, provide me with carts. At that moment the Uhlan heading the cavalcade came round the corner, and one, two, three, four, five, six, seven carts followed; my second Uhlan brought up the rear. The maire looked at them complacently, thinking, no doubt, that they were wounded from another village; but when they had passed I bid him good-bye, and thanked him for his civility, but hoped he would not think of troubling messieurs les citoyens to meet for a debate, as that was scarcely necessary now, and then rode after the wounded, leaving the maire looking perfectly bewildered.

The carts in this instance were all duly returned to their respective owners, and I got a certificate for the old man, to say that his cart was not to be required of him, unless under extremely exceptional circumstances.

Another requisition I made was not so pleasant an affair. At Nanteuil, or in the immediate neighbourhood, the French had blown up a tunnel, so that it was no slight nuisance to find, on arrival at this place with sundry packages of luggage, that there were no means of further conveyance. Yet such was once my luck. Two young Prussian officers, each with a portmanteau, were in the same plight. I had a horse; they were lieutenants in the artillery and line, and had none. Nanteuil at present consists of half a dozen houses, with nobody and nothing in them.

"Well," I said, "how shall we manage to get on to La Ferté sous Jouarre?"

"We can't leave our luggage here, or else we might all get on your horse," suggested one of the young lieutenants. "I've done that constantly before. One horse, that was known to be very frisky, was quite tamed after a ride three of us gave him from Sedan to a village twenty miles off."

Just then a railway official came up to us, and, touching his cap, said: "It's a pity you were not here a quarter of an hour ago, sir; a beautiful open carriage brought some wounded here, but that's already started back."

"A beautiful open carriage!" I ejaculated.

I said no more. One bound and I was in the saddle, and the next minute I was dashing along the road like an aide-de-camp. Past signboards and milestones, I seemed to fly, and at last, at a corner of the road, I caught a glimpse of the beautiful carriage, and I think the coachman caught a glimpse of me, for the carriage was going at a tremendous pace. On I flew. The peasants looked scared as I passed, no doubt thinking I was followed, and was a deserter or prisoner in plain clothes. Still I plied my whip, and dashed the spurs into the poor beast's reeking flanks; at last, turning a corner of the road, I found the man not more than a hundred yards in front, but he was driving like a very Jehu, and his pair of horses were good ones.

"Arrêtez," I cried, but the man either did not or would not hear. A minute more I was alongside. "Stop, you rascal!" I cried.

"No, I won't," he said, sullenly.

"You won't," I said, drawing my revolver, "if you don't, I'll shoot your horses and you after them." He trembled and turned pale, and drew up. "Now, back you go! and if you don't go as quickly as you came, I'll still carry out my threat. You impudent rascal, if you had stopped when I first called to you I would have paid you for your trouble, now I require you. To whom do those horses belong?"

"To the master of the Trois Rois, at Meaux."

"That's the very hotel we want to go to," I mentally noted. When I got back I found my companions quietly munching sausage and bread near the place where the train had stopped. I told them what had been necessary in order to induce the Frenchman to return.

"Well," said one of them, after eyeing me for a minute or so, "and what would you have done if he had not drawn up when you ordered?"

"Shot one of his horses," I answered.

"And after that?"

"Why, as soon as he had taken that one out of the harness, and began to proceed with the other, I should have shot that."

"And what about the man?"

"Oh, I should have marched him back to you, holding the revolver in his ear all the way."

"Donner und blitzen," said the lieutenant, "you ought to have been a soldier."

So we all got on to Meaux, and slept at the Hôtel des Trois Rois.

BORROWING TROUBLE.

THAT habit of mind which we express by the phrase, "meeting trouble half-way," the Americans describe as "borrowing trouble;" and their formula has over ours at least the advantage of greater brevity. Borrowing trouble it shall be then for the moment; the thing itself, not the name by which we call it, being that at which we wish to have our fling.

Some people—and those unfortunately not a few—live in the perpetual employment of borrowing trouble. They lay a life-long mortgage on their happiness, and occupy their time in paying a fancy interest, and a heavy one, for their uncomfortable loan. Anything serves them as an occasion for making themselves miserable; and their indulgence in gloomy anticipations of the worst that can befal becomes at last a trick of the mind, which they cannot overcome if they would. For the mind gets its "tricks" like the body, and they are just as difficult to overcome. No illness, according to them, can end otherwise than fatally; no money pinch can be got over save by a bankruptcy, with exceptional disgrace; no trivial misunderstanding can be healed before it becomes an irreconcilable breach; and they have always sorrowful convictions as to the present unsatisfactory state of your soul, and its ultimate destination is uncomfortably sure unless you make a complete change in your opinions, your actions, and your beliefs. Their heaven has no sun, or one they see only through smoked glass; their songs are mournful threnodies; their dramas sad and dreary tragedies; their very affections are so many poisoned roots of sorrow; and their troubles are multiplied by just so many as they have friends and acquaintances in whose welfare they are interested. If kindly natured and not saturnine, their whole energy goes into pity, till their compassion becomes a vice, and their sympathy an additional burden on the heavy weight already borne by those they love. For though they mean to help in bearing the packet of miseries of those who are heavily laden, they only make it denser and harder to carry by the weight of their own gloom. If they are mothers, they see nothing of the joy, the elasticity, the unanticipative thoughtlessness which neither "looks before nor after," the happy inconsequence of childhood; they take to heart only its troubles shaped out of the hard tasks of school, the tyranny of the elders—whether as big boys who make little ones fag for them, or as big girls who take away the little girls' toys, or as nurses and teachers who tyrannise over and oppress both big and little impartially; the troubles that have to come from inevitable ailments, and from the gradual initiation into the sorrowful realities of life. They pity children and young people so much—they say mournfully: Poor little things; life is so hard on them! And the shrill cadence of childish laughter, coming in with the sunshine and the song of birds and the scent of summer flowers, does not lighten their gloomy picture, nor destroy their melancholy theory.

Nothing can do that, for even the absolute present reality of joy is to them only an hallucination, a delusion, which must before long fade away into thin air; and blackened ashes, where had once been the glow and warmth of fire—or a fire that only seemed and was not true—are the utmost they can allow as possible to mankind. If a girl is married to the man of her choice, they sigh over the disillusionment that must come, prophesying evil things for the close of the day that has dawned so brightly. Others have married with just as high hopes and fond hearts, they say, and look where they are now! And they instance A., and B., and C., who have made notorious shipwreck of their matrimonial happiness, and speculate on the probabilities of the like unskilful pilotage in the present case. They are generally sure of diseased blood on one side or the other; for the number of people of their acquaintance who have hereditary madness, or a decided consumptive tendency, gout by inheritance, and paralysis stealing round the corner, is marvellous in proportion to the few whom they allow to be thoroughly "clean." If they cannot designate unwholesome members of the family by name, and let you into the secret of their doctor's fees and their chemist's bills, they fall foul of the bride's notorious silliness, of the bridegroom's well-known temper; of her absurd ignorance of life and house-keeping, of his monstrous extravagance or revolting meanness; and they are sure that, somehow, by the failure of health, happiness, or prosperity, there is no good in store for them.

But nothing of this is said maliciously. Quite the contrary. They are honestly grieved at the dark days to come in the future, and would if they could avert the evil omen. But what can they do? Cassandras who cry aloud and prophesy, they have only the gift of prevision not of prevention; they can but sympathise, they cannot hinder. They are the skeletons at every feast where they are invited; and write up with their awful fingers the Memento Mori, which is their version of Salve, on the threshold of every chamber they inhabit; yet they are not content with their perpetual reminder of death, which is bad enough in itself, but they add to it the still more desolate rider, "Forget not to suffer beforehand."

There is no hope growing in the path where these people take their melancholy walks, and if there are possible dangers in the far future, however remote, however only possible, only contingent, we may be sure they will expect to meet them now on the very instant, face to face, though they are just as unlikely to be found as a wild beast at liberty in London. There is the possible trouble; there is the wild beast in its cage; but that the sorrow should be stalking in gloomy majesty along the highway now at this present time is no more likely than that the lions and the tigers of the Zoological Gardens should be found meandering among the Sunday loungers up the broad-walk. If an epidemic comes into their neighbourhood, they and theirs die of it daily. A finger-ache heralds the advent of rheumatic fever, a slight huskiness is the first symptom of diphtheria; if a child is flushed with play it has the scarlet fever without the smallest doubt, and the idea of escaping the prevailing scourge, or of pulling through, if caught, never enters their heads. If anything merely mental could kill, it would be their wretched forebodings of death and disaster; and if "germs" fructified by attraction, the houses of the borrowers of trouble would never be swept clean of disease. They are good customers, however, to the chemists and the vendors of quack medicines and preventives; for, cowards in all else, they are brave in their adoption of new remedies—their special character of mind for the most part inclining them to a belief in specifics with mysterious properties undemonstrable by science. In ruder ages they would have been "held" by witchcraft, and "released" by magic. Now they are fain to content themselves with nostrums which work wonders by properties unappreciable by analyst or physicist; and when you say to them, "They cannot; there is no such property contained in a bushelful of your medicines," they only answer "They do," and instance to you cases wherein, to their knowledge, miracles have been wrought. What can you say to such reasoners? If Tenterden steeple is the cause of Goodwin Sands, the relation between architecture and geology is, to say the least of it, obscure. And if it is really any comfort to the poor borrowers of trouble, carrying their load in the desert of their own making, to build their Zoar on the shaky foundations of quackery, it would be uncharitable to prevent them, seeing that you have nothing else to offer which they would accept in its stead.

The world is full to them of snares and pitfalls; and, as parents, they borrow trouble in their daughters' good looks, their sons' gallant bearing, and the evident admiration both excite in the minds of their young companions. Their daughters especially are the subjects of their dread; and there is not a young man within a mile of them who is not a lender of the trouble they so eagerly borrow, from their conviction that he is a wolf, whose sole design it is to devour at a sitting the poor lamb bleating its innocent response to his crafty address. All balls and evening parties, all picnics and croquet meetings, are the lending offices whence they carry off large sums of borrowed trouble, which they dole out in separate portions to their belongings. Their sons will be sure to flirt with the wrong girls, their daughters will be as sure to bleat to the wolves and not to the sheep-dogs; they will have a fever from over dancing, and a chill from eating ices; they will spoil their new dresses and make them unfit for Mrs. A.'s "small and early" next week; they will be ill from to-night's excitement, and to-morrow are coming to dinner two eligible, if slightly grizzled, sheep-dogs, whom they wish devoutly their lambs would affect. Whatever trouble is afloat they borrow largely, as they sit on the side benches, like so many descendants of the Giant Despair, holding out both hands, not for gold, but for misery.

When their sons are men enough to leave home, the same habit of mind which has done its best to cripple their boyhood follows them—happily for all concerned no longer able to influence the life of those for whom their fear has done its loving worst.

As boys, the poor borrowers of trouble found an inexhaustible fund of pain in the vigour, the energy, the daring, the very education of youth. Not a gun was ever handled which was not sure to shoot the owner instead of the birds at which it was levelled; not a horse was mounted which did not carry in the saddle a fractured limb or a broken neck; every boat was a witch's bowl with a hole in her; and all athletic sports were but disguised devices for smashed shins, broken blood-vessels, and future heart disease. Study was the direct road to madness; the navy meant shipwreck and death by drowning at the first stiff breeze; the army was a certain consignment of so much precious flesh and blood to the path of a bullet; the medical profession was the surest way to get typhus fever at the first opportunity; the law was perhaps physically safe, but the law leaves no hands clean and no code of morals straight. The Church alone was an absolute haven among all this wild war of differing dangers; and in the Church, when once the debt of trouble borrowed on the temptations of college life was redeemed, there was not so much to fear. And if we knew the secret causes by which some lives have been manipulated, we should find that the reason why certain men, with no kind of vocation for their profession, were doomed to cassock and bands and sleepy sermons to simple village folk, instead of to a pair of epaulettes and a dashing charge at the head of their troop, was in the woful fears of the parental borrower of trouble, in the days when the man was but a boy, and his profession was decided before he had come to his own mastership.

If the borrowers of trouble did not insist on sharing and passing on their loan, it would not so much signify. Folks are free to make themselves unhappy in any way that strikes their fancy, but the mischief lies in communicating to others this unhappiness elaborated in their own private crucible —this trouble borrowed of false fears and sorrows that do not as yet exist, and that may not see the light at all. But happiness is impossible with this preveniently grieving race. They know joy only by name, as a fleeting, deceitful, and destructive hussy, and they choose care, in his blackest garb, as their rider en croupe. Like Trappists, they dig their own graves while they are still walking about the earth as men, not crawling beneath it as worms; and they keep their most precious jewels in a coffin as a casket. As if the absolute was not bad enough, and the punishment that overtakes the unconscious strayings of us poor dazed wayfarers not hard enough to bear, and certain enough to come—as if the sadness inherited of life itself, and which none of us can avoid, was not deep enough, the mystery of sorrow which none of us can fathom or forego not mournful enough, without adding to it all by our own act, piling the Pelion of unnecessary fears on the Ossa of inevitable pain! But no reasoning will teach these eager borrowers of trouble to wait until the time of trial actually comes, or convince them that there are two ways across the desert, and that the chances of escape or destruction are pretty nearly equal, if only one will believe it—the proponderance, indeed, lying to the side of escape, else what would have become of society and the human family had it not been so? They will not believe in the religion of hope, and the ethics of cheerfulness are as pagan reasonings to them. They are always so convinced of disasters beforehand that, when a catastrophe does really come, one would imagine it must be a relief to them, haunted as they are by vague shapes of dread which beset them like ghosts in the night. At least this is real, this is something tangible, and not a mere dreamy vision; there is no longer that terrible balance between hope and fear, the possible and the actual, which makes the brain sometimes uncertain of itself, and shakes the nerves like the leaves of an aspen-tree set in the current of a passing storm. When the worst has come, there is the repose which follows on certainty; and the sleep which comes after torture is none the less sleep and refreshment, because preceded by agony. So, when the borrowers of trouble are called on to pay their loan, and their vague fear is translated into a living fact, they are spared any further pain of uncertainty. And, as one's imaginary evil is seldom topped by the reality, for a time at least they have respite from their dread, and find their real trouble less terrible than their fancied one—their payment of sorrow of less amount than that trouble they so needlessly borrowed.

But indeed the worst use that man can make of his time is to borrow trouble in any shape. It is quite bad enough to spend it in tears and despair when it comes of its own irrepressible accord: until then, let us keep our hands clear of it, and if we must borrow anything,

borrow joy and hope, even if we have to pay back the loan with disappointment and with grieving.

IN THE PENGUIN'S ARMS.

I HAVE never been able in my heart to feel any dislike to those children who, when you have been telling them an elaborate fairy tale, and have wound up in the most successful manner with wedding favours, and enormous castles, and living happy ever after, for the good people, and with a sprinkling of dragons and blue fire for the bad ones, always ask, "Well, and what then?" They decline to accept your peroration, they want to know what happened after those events which you have taken such pains to explain. And as, of course, it is impossible to tell them, and not merely impossible but injudicious (as you would probably have to recount how the people whom you left happily married fought with each other very soon, and were found in the Divorce Court, and how the wicked man hood-winked the dragon, and got out of the blue fire, and made his fortune as a "promoter" on the Stock Exchange, and is now churchwarden of his parish, and an ornament of society), you are compelled to put an unfriendly termination to the discussion, and shuffle your questioners off to bed. I suppose my disinclination to be hard upon these inquisitive children springs from a fellow-feeling with them. I, too, object to conventional endings in any shape, and, with the children, ask, "What then?" When the novelist, at the three hundred and twenty-third page of his third volume, shows me Angelina lying on Edwin's breast, and says in his concluding paragraph, "His strong arm was around her, her head was pillowed on his bosom; after all her troubles and vicissitudes the Wanderer of Walthamstow had reached that haven at last. Need we say more?" I feel inclined to cry, "Yes! Tell us what the Wanderer of Walthamstow did a few months afterwards, when Edwin took to drinking, and when his strong arm was laid about her, instead of around her. Or, on the other hand, what Edwin did, when the W. of W. began to be very much bored by his milk-and-water sentimental goodness, and wanted to wander about Walthamstow again, in search, perhaps, of the wicked nobleman from whose machinations Edwin had rescued her!"

At the theatre, too, I am not content, just before the fall of the curtain, with the assurance of the heroine that, if it be the wish of their kind friends, she, and the rest of the company, "will drain the Seven Vials of Violence" every evening. I want to see the effect of those they have already drained; I want to see the comic man slanging the heavy father for having "cut him out of a bit of fat" by speaking "before his cue;" I should like to hear the leading lady upbraiding the walking gentleman for having been too much of a walking gentleman upon the skirt of her dress; I am curious about the parts played by most of the performers in private, so very different sometimes to those which they play before the public. I linger the last to see the lights being turned out one by one, to see the old women appearing in the slips, to hear the box-keepers coughing behind the mufflers in which they are wrapping themselves, to see the brown holland draperies enshrouding, after a ghostly fashion, the bravery of the crimson and gold decorations, finally, to see the great curtain raised again, to mark the fireman's advance towards the orchestra, with his snake-like coil of hose, to feel the fresh rush of air which passes through the deserted house, and then to take my leave reluctantly, saying to myself, "What then?"

Scores of places are there which I love to picture to myself, in what I may call their "well, what then?" state. The parish church of Crathie, for example. That must be a curious sight after its three or four months of aristocratic congregation. The royal pew, with the sovereign and the princes and princesses, the lords and ladies in waiting, the equerries, and the gold sticks and silver sticks, a little further off the gillies and the magnificent, full-fed flunkies, as much in the background as their own size and the smallness of the building will permit. The Abergeldie pew, with its complement of royalty; the Corndarvon pew, with its noble sportsmen and high-bred ladies; the other seats crammed with tourists rapidly resolving themselves into a stiff-necked generation in their endeavours to catch a glimpse of their fellow-worshippers, and the pulpit occupied by some famous theologian or preacher of renown. In the deep, dark winter time, when royalty with its retinue is at Osborne, and the fine ladies and gentlemen in their English homes; when the tourists have exchanged their suits of ditto for homely Oxford mixture, and their

alpenstocks for steel pens; when the renowned theologian is delighting the hearts of Edinburgh congregations, or demolishing the theories of some sceptical antagonist in his snug library in Moray-place, that is the time to ask, "Well, and what then?" I picture to myself the little church surrounded by snow, which has just been sufficiently cleared away to make a path from the wicket-gate to the porch, its officiating minister, a plain, honest, God-fearing man, who has worn away the best years of his life in the unpretending, ugly little manse hard by, its congregation consisting of one or two farmers, a few shepherds, and a dozen old women dotted about here and there, but scrupulously keeping clear of the seats which in other times are occupied by the great folk. No royalty, no aristocracy, no mention in the Court Circular for Crathie in its out-of-the-season or "well, what then?" time.

I have recently had an opportunity of studying what it is now the fashion to call the "inner life" of one or two well-known places, in their out-of-the-season garb. The force of circumstances lately necessitated my quartering myself at the little Welsh town of Ap Slammer for a few days, and, on my arrival in the town, I proceeded straight to the Penguin's Arms. Ap Slammer, as is well known to all who have explored that lovely neighbourhood, is generally looked upon as the head-quarters for the North Wales district, the place where the heavy luggage is left to be called for on return, and whence the tourists start, knapsack-girt and pole-bearing, as earnestly in search of the picturesque as Dr. Syntax on his celebrated tour, but with much greater chance of having their desires gratified. It is a wretched little place enough, with a population which has given up its pretty national dress, but retains its hideous national language; with a long straggling street, full of wretched little shops, but with two or three very good hotels. Of these, I understood that the Penguin's Arms was the best, and to the Penguin's Arms, as I have said, I drove straight from the railway station. The streets of Ap Slammer were not more deserted than those of any country town of the same size, and the walls were radiant with red posting-bills, announcing the advent of some comic singer and his troupe, so that it was not until I arrived at the hotel door that I began to realise the fact that the season of Ap Slammer was entirely over, and that I should have an opportunity of seeing it in its "well, what then?" state.

The door of the hotel was shut, but it opened as the omnibus, of which I was the sole occupant, drove up, and the stout waiter in the dirty apron, jacket, and yesterday's necktie, which constitute the undress uniform of waiters, bowed me in. The news of an unexpected arrival seemed to spread instantaneously. Spectral females emerged from the bar, and stood curtsying; a "boots," who in the fallow leisure of his life had apparently taken lodgings in the neighbourhood, rushed across from over the way, and an old gentleman, a very Rip Van Winkle of a landlord, roused himself from a sound sleep in his private parlour, and came forward to give me welcome. Even then I failed to realise the position; it was not until I asked whether I could have a sitting-room, that I saw by the faintest smile on Rip Van Winkle's countenance the true state of the case.

"I could have a sitting-room," he said; and, in proof of his assertion, he immediately showed me four on the ground-floor; large square rooms, which would have accommodated the Vicar of Wakefield and his family party, including Squire Thornhill and Mr. Burchell. I suppose I looked rather dubiously at these vast apartments (I certainly felt that if I were compelled to take one I should have a small corner screened off in which I could live), but the landlord told me there were plenty of other rooms up-stairs, and, on our ascending, showed me two, in either of which the county ball could have been held with ease. I at last selected a small chamber, with one window, and a bedroom immediately above it, both looking on to a very prettily arranged and admirably kept garden, on the actual edge of the Menai Straits.

A total absence of bell-ringing in such an establishment first awakened my curiosity, and when the waiter brought me my luncheon, I proceeded to sound him, suggesting first, with a careless and off-hand manner, that I supposed they were not very full just then? The waiter, who by this time had attired himself in raven black, and wore a spotless neckcloth with a bow which many a curate would envy, was equal to the occasion. He replied, with a deprecatory cough, that they were not quite full. I suggested that their season was probably over? He admitted it. Had they had a good season? An excellent

one. They made up eighty beds in the house, and had often to hire rooms out. Eighty beds! and how many people have they staying in the house now? An expression of agony crossed the waiter's face, and he made for the door. I intercepted him. I pressed home my question. He endeavoured to equivocate. At last I wrung from him the appalling fact, that in that enormous house I was the sole guest.

I think the waiter was the only person who ever knew that I was in possession of that dreadful secret. With the other members of the household I used to play at being perfectly unsuspicious of it. I chatted pleasantly with the landlord, I made a point of talking hurriedly with the chambermaid, as though I knew the value of her time, and was expecting that she would be whisked away to impatient bell-pullers, and when I sent the "boots" on an errand, I always asked him if he had leisure to fulfil it, carefully ignoring the fact that all his time, energies, and blacking were devoted to my service. After awhile, I began to like the solitude immensely. My two rooms were thoroughly comfortable; the cooking and the wines good, and the attendance excellent; and I amused myself by creeping about the house, and looking in at the various rooms, and picturing to myself the people who had last occupied them. I peered in through the door of the great coffee-room, and straightway all the tables piled upon each other became properly arranged around the walls, the dusty blinds of the bow-window were drawn up, the paper in which the looking-glass frame was enshrouded was removed, the rolled-up carpet was put down, and the room peopled. At one of those tables in the bow-window sit the two young men who have just arrived, and are enjoying their dinner, after a five-and-twenty miles' walk; both strong, active, clean-limbed men, albeit they are Londoners, and that ten months out of the twelve are spent by them in confinement and study. One is an attorney, the other a barrister; they are bachelors, and sworn friends; living in the same chambers, belonging to the same club, and always spending their holidays together. Switzerland is their favourite resort, and the chamois hunters of the Tyrol, and the guides of Chamounix and Courmayeur, are not unacquainted with their names and their exploits, but the war this year has kept them at home, and they are talking of Snowdon and Helvellyn with good-natured contempt. The solitary man at the table next them, the fat man with the flushed face and heavy jowl, is also a barrister, but of a very different type. That is Mr. Ethelred Jinks, Q.C., a noted parliamentary counsel, who won his spurs at the Old Bailey, but who now never visits the scenes of his former glories, unless specially retained. The power of cross-examination, of screwing the exact reply which he wanted to get out of an unwilling witness, and of frightening a defiant one with the tonitrant tone and redundancy of action which served him so well in the C. C. C., Ethelred has imported into his new sphere, and has thereby made for himself a name. He is looked upon as a wit, and has a collection of highly flavoured stories, which are always called for when the ladies retire from the dinner-table, and are highly appreciated in the smoking-room. He has been staying with one great man, and is journeying to the house of another, resting at the Penguin's Arms on his way. He listens with an odd kind of wonderment to such scraps of conversation as he hears from the next table, for Ethelred would as soon think of flying as of attempting to walk, and the only climb in which he is interested is the ascent from the front row of the court to the judicial bench, and that is one which he is not likely to make. Tea is the meal which is being served at the next table, with boiled eggs and dry toast, a refreshing and inexpensive repast, partaken of by Mr. Moger of Upper Kelvin-grove, West Holloway, his wife, and sister-in-law. Mr. Moger is a clerk in Somerset House, from which establishment he is now away on a month's holiday. He is highly respectable, and the authorities of Somerset House are pleased to speak of him as "a conscientious man with much zeal for the service." He has never been late in his attendance during the twenty-three years of his official career; he never left an "i" undotted or a "t" uncrossed, or made a blot on any document with which he had to deal; he is priggish, pedantic, and stupid, but immensely respectable. He and his travelling companions arrived at the Penguin's Arms on the top of the coach. They are making this tour, not with any low notion of enjoying themselves, but "to expand their minds, and to enlarge their acquaintance with the works of nature." That is the phrase which Mr. Moger will employ in his lecture at the West Holloway Vestry Hall on the occasion of one of the penny readings, when he will give an account of

his trip. It will be immensely statistical and topographical, and will be delivered in a high-pitched monotone; it will be thought very highly of by the audience, and will come between a song, Cease Rude Boreas, by Mr. Squirk, the amateur baritone of the neighbourhood, and a solo on the harmonium by Pedler, the church organist. Other coffee-room characters rose before my fancy: a short man in a red beard, and his tall, Quixote-like companion, who astonished the waiter by declining to drink anything but beer for their dinner, and who have been talking an extraordinary jargon about cross lights, and middle distance, and bits of colour, to the astonishment of the Manchester magnifico next to them. These are artists on their way to Bettws-y-coed, or some such paintable place. There is a great sheaf of what they call "their traps," consisting of easels and camp-stools, mahl-sticks, and white umbrellas with long handles, bound up together, and standing in a corner of the hall. Then I fancied a little group of a father and his boy, the lad going to school for the first time, a little down at leaving his mother and sisters, but kept up by the thought of the new life awaiting him. The father infinitely more depressed at the idea of parting with his only son, and then—then a gust of the autumnal wind blew the coffee-room door to with a bang, the ghosts of my creation vanished, and I was again the solitary guest at the Penguin's Arms.

I had a view of another well-known place, in its out-of-the-season state, before quitting Wales. I had heard so much of the well-known watering-place of Llandudu, its freshness, its salubrity, its beautiful walks round the Great Worm's Head, that I thought I should like to have a look at it. Moreover, I saw by the advertisement, that the dryness of the air, and the cheapness of the lodgings, made it a desirable winter residence for invalids. I am bound to say the invalids had not responded to the suggestion. In my life I never saw such a deserted spot. The place itself is an ordinary British watering-place, a bay between two headlands, a crescent line of lodging-houses following the sweep of the bay, and a straight street of shops immediately behind the crescent. In this crescent, a very large one, there was scarcely a house that had not its flag of distress flying, its bill of apartments to let in every floor. It was a raw, autumnal morning, and throughout my walk from one end to the other of the broad handsome esplanade, I did not meet one creature. Down on the enormous breadth of sand I looked, and saw three little children with their governess, and two dogs. I peered in at the combined "bath, library, and billiard room," on the edge of the cliff, and saw an old gentleman, with ragged whiskers and a red comforter, reading the Standard of the previous day. Immediately underneath this cliff is a little bit of wooden pier, jutting out into the sea, whereon an elderly lady was taking exercise, walking up and down as shortly and sharply as the polar bear at the Zoological Gardens. On the Great Worm's Head I met a coast guardsman; I asked him if they had had a good season at Llandudu. He said he did not know; he had only just come there. I asked him if he would have to stop there for some time. I never shall forget the expression of his face, when, after looking round, he said he thought he should. Then I turned and fled to the railway station. I do not know what Llandudu may look like in the season, out of it it is a very gruesome place indeed.

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THE ROSE AND THE KEY.

CHAPTER I. UNOCULUS.

THE level light of a summer sunset, over a broad heath, is brightening its brown undulations with a melancholy flush, and turning all the stalks of heather in the foreground into twisted sticks of gold. Insect wings sparkle dimly in the air; the lagging bee drones homeward, and a wide drift of crows, cawing high and faint, show like shadows against the sea-green sky, flecked with soft crimson, as they sail away to the distant dormitories of Westwold Forest.

Toward the sunset end of this savage heath stand four gigantic fir-trees, casting long shadows. One, indeed, is little more than a rotten stump, some twelve feet high; all bend eastwards, shorn of their boughs nearly to the top, and stretching the arms that remain, some yellow and stripped of their bark, in the same direction, as if they all signalled to the same distant point. These slanting fir-trees look like the masts of a mighty wreck; and antiquaries say that they are the monumental relics of a forest that lies buried under the peat.

A young lady, her dress of dark serge, with a small black straw-hat, a little scarlet feather in it, and wearing a pair of boots, such as a country artist might produce, made of good strong leather, with thick soles, but, in spite of coarse work and clumsy material, showing a wonderfully pretty little foot, is leaning lightly against one of these great firs. Her companion, an elderly lady, slight and merry, sits on a little hillock of turf at her feet.

The dress of the elder lady corresponds with that of the younger. It is that of a person inured to the practice of a strict but not uncomfortable economy.

The young lady has dropped a little japanned colour-box and a block-book at her feet. Is she an artist? Possibly a governess? At all events, she is one of the loveliest creatures eyes ever lighted on. Is there any light more becoming than that low, richly tinted beam, that comes subdued through the mists of sunset?

With a pleased look—the listening look which such spiritual delight assumes—with parted lips, the light touching the edge of her little teeth, with eyes a-glow with rapture, drinking in the splendour and beauty of the transitory hour and scene, as if she could look on in silence and beatitude for ever, the girl leans her little shoulder to the ancient tree.

With a long sigh, she says at last:

"I was going to ask your forgiveness, dear old cousin Max."

"For what?" asked the old lady, turning up a face pleasantly illuminated with the golden light.

"For making you take so long a walk. I'm a little tired myself. But I don't beg your pardon, because I think this more than makes amends. Let us look for a minute more, before all fades."

The old lady stood up, with a little shrug and screw of her shoulders.

"So I am—quite stiff—my old bones do complain; but oh, really, it is quite beautiful! I see it so much better standing here; that bank was in my way. How splendid—gorgeous!"

The scene was indeed worth a detour in their homeward route. Two grand and distant ranges of mountain, approaching from right and left, stop short in precipitous terminations that resemble the confronting castles of two gigantic lines of

fortification, leaving an undulating plane between, with the sunset sky, and piles of flaming cloud, for a horizon; and, in the comparatively near foreground, rises between these points an abrupt knoll crowned by the ruined castle of Cardyllion, and, with the village studded with grand old trees, looking like a town on fire.

In nearer foreground, in the hollow, in solemn purple shadow, are masses of forest; and against the faint green and yellow sky are spread streaks of purple vapour, and the crimson and scarlet fires of sunset.

"This should reconcile us to very humble ways; and more, I feel that through marble pillars, through great silk curtains, among mirrors, bronzes, china, and all the rest, looking out from a velvet sofa, I could not see, much less enjoy all this, as I do."

Cousin Max laughed.

"Very wise! very philosophical! very romantic!" exclaimed she. "But it is enough to be content with one's station in life, and not to grow too fond of any. To be content is, simply, not to wish for change. My poor father used to say that those who wished for change were like those who wished for death. They longed for a state of which they had no experience, and for which they might not be so fit as they fancied, for every situation has its liabilities as well as its privileges. That is what he used to say."

"Dear Max, I withdraw it, if I said anything sensible, for whenever I do you grow so wise that you bore me to death." She kissed her. "Do let us be foolish, darling, while we are together, and we shall understand one another perfectly. See how quickly the scene changes. It is very beautiful, but not quite so glorious now."

At this moment the sound of steps, close behind them upon the soft peat, made them both turn their heads.

A sleek, lean man, lantern-jawed, in a shabby, semi-clerical costume, passed them by in front, from right to left, in an oblique line. He was following a path, and was twirling a stick slowly in his hand by its crooked handle, and gazing up at the sky with one eye—the other was blind—with a smile that was meant to be saintly. In spite of his meek smile, and his seedy and mean exterior, the two ladies had come to connect ideas of the sinister and the dangerous with this man.

"Upon my life," said the elder lady, after a pause, "I do believe—I'm almost sure—that is the very man."

"I am perfectly certain," said the young lady, who had followed him with her eyes until he was hidden from view by a screen of furze and hawthorns, a little way to the left. "I can't imagine what that odious, ill-looking man can possibly mean by following us about as he does."

"Perhaps he is asking himself a question very like that about us?" said the old lady, with a laugh.

"Not he. He *is* following us."

"I saw him at Penmaen Mawr, but nowhere else," said Miss Max.

"But I saw him at Chester, and there could be no mistake about his watching us there. I saw him look at our luggage, and look for our names there, and I saw him stand on the step of his carriage at Conway, until he saw us get out with the evident intention of staying there; and then he got down with that little leather bag, that seems to be all that he possesses, and he came to our hotel, simply, I am certain, to watch us. You must recollect, when we returned from our little walk, that I told you I saw him sitting in the room near the stairs, don't you recollect, writing—don't you remember?"

"Yes, I remember your saying there was a man blind of an eye, the same we had observed at Penmaen Mawr, who had followed us, and was in the same place. But the people at the inn said he was a travelling secretary to some religious society, collecting money."

"Did not you say," persisted the young lady, "when you first saw him, that he was a very ill-looking man?"

"Yes; so I did. So he is. He looks sanctimonious and roguish, and that white eye makes his face—I hope it is not very uncharitable to say so—almost villanous. I think him a very ill-looking man, and if I thought he was following us, I should speak to the police, and then set out for my humble home without losing an hour."

"And you don't think he is following us?" said the young lady.

"If he is travelling to collect subscriptions he may very well have come here about his business, and to Penmaen Mawr, and to Chester. I don't see why he must necessarily be following us. And Conway, too, he would have stopped at naturally. It does not follow at all that he is in pursuit of us because he happens to come to the same place.

The king himself has followed her
When she has gone before.

We are not worth robbing, my dear, and we look it. You must not be so easily frightened."

"Frightened! I'm not the least frightened," said the young lady, spiritedly. "I'm not what is termed a nervous young lady. You have no right to think that. But I don't believe he has any other business but tracking us from place to place. What other business on earth could he have had—getting out at Abber, for instance? I forgot to mention Abber. It is very odd, you must allow. Let us walk on." She had picked up her colour-box and her block. "Very odd that he should get out of the train wherever we stop, always about business, we are to suppose, that has no connexion with us; that he should follow us, by the same odd accident, where there is no rail, and where we can only get by a fly; that he should get always into the same quiet little inns, though, of course, he would like much better to be in noisier places, where he would meet people like himself; and that he should turn up, this evening, so near our poor little lodgings, and go by that path which brings him there. What on earth can he want in that direction?"

'Yes, I do think it's odd, my dear; and, I say, I think he does look very villanous. But what can he possibly want?" said the old lady. "Why should he follow us? How are we to account for it?"

"I don't pretend to account for it," said the girl, as they trudged on side by side; "but it is just possible that he may be a detective, who mistakes us for some people he is in pursuit of. I only know that he is spoiling my poor little holiday, and I do wish I were a man, that I might give him a sound drubbing."

The old lady laughed, for the girl spoke threateningly, with a flash from her splendid eyes, and for a moment clenched the tiniest little fist you can fancy.

"And you think he's gone before us to Pritchard's farm-house?" said the old lady, glancing over her shoulder in that direction, above which a mass of thundrous cloud was rising. "Dear me! how like thunder that is."

"Awfully!" said the young lady. "Stop a moment—I thought I heard distant thunder. Listen!"

They both paused, looking toward those ominous piles of cloud, black against the now fast-fading sky.

CHAPTER II. A GUIDE.

"Hush!" said the young lady, laying her fingers on her companion's arm.

They listened for a minute or more.

"There it is!" exclaimed the girl, as a faint rumble spread slowly along and among the mountains.

They remained silent for a minute after it had passed away.

"Yes, that certainly was thunder," said the elder lady; "and it is growing so dark; it would not do to be caught in the storm, and to meet our one-eyed persecutor, perhaps, and we have fully a mile to go still. Come, we must walk a little faster."

"I hope it will be a good thunder-storm," said the young lady watching the sky, as they hurried on. "It frightens me more than it does you, but I think I like it better."

"You may easily do that, dear; and like our farm-house better than I do, also."

"We are frightfully uncomfortable, I agree. Let us leave it to-morrow," said the young lady.

"And where shall we go next?" inquired her companion.

"To Llanberris, if I'm to decide," said the girl. "But first we must look over the castle at Cardyllion, and there are one or two old houses I should like to sketch—only roughly."

"You are making too great a labour of your holiday: you sketch too much."

"Well, we leave to-morrow, and the day after is Sunday, and then—on Monday—my holiday ends, and my slavery begins," said the young lady, vehemently.

"You certainly do use strong language," said the elder lady, a little testily. "Why don't you try to be contented? Dear me! How much nearer the thunder is!"

"It will soon be darker, and then we shall see the lightning splendidly," said the young lady.

"Don't stop, darling, let us get on. I was going to say, you must study to be content—remember your catechism. The Queen, I dare say, has things to complain of; and Farmer Pritchard's daughter, who has, as you fancy, a life of so much liberty, will tell you she is something of a slave, and can't do, by any means, quite as she likes. I only hope, dear Maud, we have money enough to bring us home."

"We can eke it out with my drawings. We shan't starve. We can have the ruins of Carnarvon Castle for breakfast, and eat Snowdon for dinner, and turn the Menai into tea. It is a comfort to know I can

live by my handiwork. I don't think, cousin, I have a shilling I can call my own. If I could earn enough by my drawing to live on, I think I should prefer it to any other way of living I can imagine."

"You used to think a farmer's life the happiest on earth," said the old lady, trudging along. "There's Richard Pritchard, why not marry him?"

"I might do worse; but there are half a dozen conclusive reasons against it. In the first place, I don't think Richard Pritchard would marry me; and, next, I know I wouldn't marry Richard Pritchard; and, thirdly, and seriously, I shall never marry at all, never, and for the reasons I have told you often; and those reasons can never change."

"We shall see," said her companion, with a laugh and a little shake of her head. "Good Heavens!" exclaimed the old lady, as nearer thunder resounded over the landscape.

"Hush!" whispered the girl, as they both paused and listened, and when it had died away, "What a noble peal that was!" she exclaimed. And as they resumed their march she continued: "I shall never marry: and my resolution depends on my circumstances, and they, as you know, are never likely to alter—humanly speaking, they never can alter—and I have not courage enough to make myself happy; and, coward as I am, I shall break my own heart rather than break my chains. Where are we now?"

As she said this she came to a sudden halt at the edge of a deep channelled stream, whose banks just there stand steep and rugged as those of a ravine, crowned with straggling masses of thorn and briars. She gazed across, and up and down the stream, which was swollen just then by mountain rains of the night before.

"Can we have missed our way?" said the elder lady.

"What on earth has become of the wooden bridge?" exclaimed the younger one.

There was still quite light enough to discern objects; and Miss Max, catching her young companion by the hand, whispered:

"Good gracious, Maud! Is that the man?"

"What man?" she asked, startled.

"The blind man—the person who has been following us."

Miss Maud—for such was the young lady's name—said nothing in reply. The two ladies stood irresolute, side by side. Maud had seen the person who was approaching, once only in her life. It was two days before, as she and her cousin were getting out of their fly at the Verney Arms, in the pretty little town of Cardyllion. She was a proud young lady; it would have taken a good deal to make her avow, even to herself, the slightest interest in any such person. Nevertheless, she recognised him a good many seconds before good Miss Max had discovered her mistake.

She was standing beside that elderly lady. They were both looking across the stream; the young lady furthest from the stranger had turned a little away.

There is quite light enough to see faces still, but it will not last long. The young man is very handsome, and also tall. He has been fishing, and has on a pair of those gigantic jack-boots in which fishermen delight to walk the rivers. He wears a broad-leafed hat, round which are wound his flies. A boy with his rod, net, and basket trudges behind.

The old lady speaks to him as he passes. He stops, lowers his cigar, and inclines to listen.

"I beg pardon," she says. "Can you tell me? There was—I am sure it was on this very spot—a bridge of plank across this stream, and I can't find it."

"Oh! They were taking that away today, as I passed by. It had grown unsafe, and the—the—— Oh, yes; the new one is to be put up in the morning."

The odd little hesitation I have recorded was caused by his seeing the young lady, on a sudden, in the midst of his sentence, and for the moment forgetting everything else. And well he might, for he had been dreaming of her for the last two days.

He dropped his cigar, became, all at once, much more deferential, and with his hat in his hand, said:

"Do you wish to cross the brook? Because if you do, I can show you to some stepping-stones about a quarter of a mile higher up, where you can get across very nicely."

"Thanks. I should be so very much obliged," said the old lady.

The gentleman was only too happy, and having sent the boy on to the Verney Arms, talked very agreeably as he accompanied and directed their march. He had come down there for a little fishing; he knew the Verneys a little, and old Lord

Verney was such a very odd man! He told them stories of him, and very amusing some of them were, and his eye always glanced to see the effect of his anecdotes upon Miss Maud. Two or three times he ventured to speak to her. The young lady did not either encourage or discourage these little experiments, and answered very easily and carelessly, and, I am bound to say, very briefly too.

In the mean time, the thunder grew nearer and more frequent, and the wild reflection of the lightning flickered on trees and fields about them.

And now they had reached the thick clump of osiers, beneath which the stepping stones, of which they were in search, studded the stream. Only the summits of these stones were now above the water, and the light was nearly gone.

CHAPTER III. PLAS YLWD.

"I HAVE not courage for this," said the old lady, aghast, eyeing the swift current and the uncertain footing to which, in the most deceptive possible twilight, she was invited to commit herself.

"But you know, darling, we must get across somehow," urged the girl, cruelly. "It is quite easy; don't fancy anything else."

And she stepped lightly over.

"It is all very fine with your young feet and eyes," she replied; "but for an old woman like me it is little better than the tight rope; and it would be death to me to take a roll in that river. What on earth is to be done?"

"It *is* really a great deal easier than you suppose," said the obliging young gentleman, not sorry to find an opportunity of agreeing with Miss Maud, "and I think I can make it perfectly easy if you will just take my hand as you get across. I'll walk in the stream beside you. It is quite shallow here, and these things make me absolutely impervious to the water. Pray, try. I undertake to get you across perfectly safely."

So, supporting her across with his left hand, and walking beside her with his right, ready to assist her more effectually in case of a slip or stumble, he conducted her quite safely over.

When the lady had thanked him very earnestly, and he had laughingly disclaimed all right to her acknowledgments, another difficulty suddenly struck her.

"And now, how *are* we to find our farmhouse? I know the way to it perfectly from the wooden bridge; but from this, I really haven't an idea."

"I'll make it out," said the young lady, before their guide had time to speak. "I like exploring; and it can't be far—a little in this direction. Thank you very much."

The last words were to the young man, whose huge boots were pouring down rivulets on the dry dust of the little pathway on which they were standing.

"If I am not too disagreeable a guide, in this fisherman's plight," he said, glancing, with a laugh, at his boots, "nothing would please me so much as being allowed to point out the way to you. I happen to know it perfectly, and it is by no means so easy as you may suppose, particularly by this light—one can hardly tell distances, ever so near."

"Pray, don't think of it," said the girl, "I can make it out quite easily."

"Nonsense, my dear Maud. You could never make it out; and besides," she added, in an under tone, "how can you tell where that blind man may turn up, that follows us, as you say? We are very much obliged to you," she said, turning to him, "and you are doing us really a great kindness. I only hope it won't be bringing you too far out of your way?"

Very pleasantly, therefore, they went on. It became darker, rapidly, and though the thunder grew louder and more frequent, and the lightning gleamed more vividly across the landscape, the storm was still distant enough to enable Maud to enjoy its sights and sounds, without a sense of danger.

The thunder-clouds are stealthily but swiftly ascending. These battlements of pandemonium, "like an exhalation," screen the sky and stars with black, and from their field of darkness leaps now and then the throbbing blue, that leaves the eye dazzled, and lights rock and forest, hill and ruin, for a moment in its pale glare. Then she listens for the rumble that swells into long and loud-echoing reverberations. He stays his narrative, and all stop and listen. He smiles, as from under his long lashes he covertly watches the ecstasy of the beautiful girl. And then they set out again; the old lady vowing that she can't think why she's such a fool as to stop at such an hour, and tired to death as she is, to listen to thunder.

Farmer Pritchard, happily for wandering Tintos in that part of the world, is not one of those scientific agriculturists who cut down their hedge-rows and square their

fields. Our little party has now reached the stile which, under the shadow of some grand old elms, admits the rustics, who frequent Richard Pritchard, to his farm-yard.

It is an old and a melancholy remark, that the picturesque and the comfortable are hardly compatible. Here, however, these antagonistic principles are as nearly as possible reconciled. The farm-yard is fenced round with hawthorns and lime-trees, and the farm-house is a composite building, of which the quarter in which the ladies were lodged had formed a bit of the old Tudor manor-house of Plas Ylwd, which gave its name to the place.

A thatched porch, with worn stone pillars and steps, fronts the hatch; and from beside this, through a wide window of small panes, a cheerful light was scattered along the rough pavement, and more faintly on the hanging foliage of the tree opposite.

"What a pretty old house!" the young fisherman exclaimed, looking up at the gables, and the lattices, and the chimneys that rose from the deep thatch of the cobbled old house.

"It may be prettier in this light, or rather darkness, than at noon," said the old lady, with a shrug, and a little laugh.

"But it really is, in any light, an extremely pretty old house," said the girl, taking up the cudgels for their habitation, "and everything is so beautifully neat. I think them such nice people."

A few heavy rain-drops had fallen sullenly as they came, and now with the suddenness of such visitations, the thunder shower, all at once, began to descend.

"Come in, come in," said the old lady, imperiously.

Very willingly the young gentleman stepped under the porch.

They all three stood there for a moment, looking out towards the point from which, hitherto, the lightning had been chiefly visible.

"Oh! But you must come in and take a cup of tea," said the old lady, suddenly recollecting. "You *must* come in, really."

Their walk and little chat, and the climbing of stiles, and the rural simplicities that surrounded, had made her feel quite intimate. He glanced covertly at the young lady, but in her face he saw neither invitation nor prohibition; so he felt at liberty to choose, and he stepped, very gladly, into the house.

As you enter the old house you find yourself in a square vestibule, if I can call by so classic a name anything so rude. Straight before you yawns an arch that spans it from wall to wall, giving admission to the large kitchen of the farm-house: at your right, under a corresponding moulded arch, opens the wide oak staircase of the manor-house, with a broad banister, on the first huge stem of which, as on a vestal altar, is placed a burnished candlestick of brass, in which burns a candle to welcome the return of old Miss Max and young Miss Maud Guendoline.

The young lady steps in with the air, though she knows it not, of a princess into her palace.

As they enter, her ear is struck by an accent, not Welsh, and a voice the tones of which have something of a cold, bleating falsetto, which is intensely disagreeable, and looking quickly through the arched entrance to the kitchen, she sees there, taking his ease in an arm-chair by the fire-place, the long-visaged man with the white eye.

He is holding forth agreeably, with a smile on his skinny lips. He gesticulates with a long hand, the nails of which are black as ebony. The steam of the saintly man's punch makes a halo round his head; and his hard cheeks are flushed with the pink that tells of inward comfort. His one effective eye addresses itself, although he is haranguing Richard Pritchard's wife, to Richard Pritchard's daughter, who is very pretty, and leans, listening to the ugly stranger, with her bare arms rolled in her apron, on the high back of one of the old-fashioned oak chairs.

SCIENCE AND IMAGINATION.

The vulgar conception of a man of science pictures him as an irreclaimable Dr. Dryasdust, strongly impressed with the fact that two and two make four, loving languages for the sake of their declensions and conjugations, and preferring those which have most irregular verbs. The populace's man of science delights in weights and measures, logarithms, statistical tables, tottles of the whole, and discoveries which unscientific men will turn to account in the form of patents. The conventional man of science is a plodder who grants nothing until it is logically or experimentally proved, a matter-of-fact dullard, a proser, a bore.

Another idea has long been current exactly the reverse of the above. Your

philosopher is a dreamer, a schemer, a speculator, whom his friends ought to put into a lunatic asylum—an alchemist, a squarer of the circle, a concoctor of the elixir of life. This species of philosopher works at a project, because the world holds it to be impossible.

Recent years have done much to efface both these notions of what philosophy is and is not. Society is more tolerant than it was, forty or fifty years ago, of philosophical discussions, even when they touch upon the gravest subjects. Moreover, truth may be resisted, and cavilled at, and pooh-poohed, up to a certain point; but, beyond a certain point, it is irresistible. When its evidences have accumulated into a mass of sufficient volume, they burst the sandy dykes of prejudice, and sweep all opposition before them. This is especially notable in the school of which Dr. Tyndall is one of the most illustrious ornaments. He and his colleagues have been listened to unwillingly; they have gained their ground laboriously; and now, we believe, they have more disciples, or at least very nearly convinced listeners, than choose openly to avow themselves as such.

All Dr. Tyndall's works mark advances in the progress of modern science. They may be read over and over again with increased instruction and interest. They are indispensable to the favourite bookshelf of every one who wishes to know, and is able to think. On this account we remind our readers of an addition to them, which, though professedly merely an occasional discourse, really makes an integral part of the series. On the 16th of September, 1870, Dr. Tyndall delivered before the British Association, at Liverpool, a wonderful oration, On the Scientific Use of the Imagination.

We are constantly reminded, even by the conversational expressions of every-day life, of the help which imagination affords to science. How is an important discovery spoken of? It is a bright idea, a lucky hit, a happy thought, a fortunate guess, a clever notion, an inspiration of genius, a successful experiment. It is evidently something good and new attained by an intellectual leap, or spring, and not a result worked out step by step, by chopping logic and spinning a series of "therefores," like Euclid's solution of a problem.

What are scientific experiments but brilliant efforts of the imagination? "I imagine that, under such and such circumstances, such and such will be the case. I don't know it; but I will try." By no one is this fact more profusely and more convincingly illustrated than by Dr. Tyndall, both in his published books and his lectures. He amplifies the experiments of other philosophers, besides inventing experiments of his own. He wishes to know whether pure water be, as most people suppose it, absolutely colourless. It is so, as we usually see it, in small quantities; but a very thin stratum of pale ale is almost as colourless as a stratum of water. He pours distilled water into a drinking-glass; it exhibits no trace whatever of colour: so he imagines an experiment to show us that this pellucid liquid, in sufficient thickness, has a very decided colour.

"Here," he says triumphantly, "is a tube fifteen feet long, placed horizontally, its ends being stopped by pieces of plate-glass. At one end of the tube stands an electric lamp, from which a cylinder of light will be sent through the tube. It is now half filled with water, the upper surface of which cuts the tube in two equal parts horizontally. Thus, I send half of my beam through air, and half through water, and with this lens I intend to project a magnified image of the adjacent end of the tube upon this screen. You now see the image, composed of two semicircles, one of which is due to the light which has passed through the water, the other to the light which has passed through the air. Side by side, thus, you can compare them; and you notice that while the air semicircle is a pure white, the water semicircle is a bright and delicate blue-green." The real colour of distilled water was ascertained and proved beyond a doubt.

Again: somebody once imagined that sound was owing to commotions of some kind produced in the air, and consequently that air was necessary to the propagation of sound. No air, no sound, it was guessed. But what airless region of the world could the learned then find to put the notion to the test? In course of time, the air-pump was constructed. A celebrated experiment, which proved the truth of the theory, was made by a philosopher named Hawksbee, before the Royal Society, in 1705. He so fixed a bell within the receiver of an air-pump, that he could ring the bell when the receiver was exhausted. Before the air was withdrawn, the sound of the bell was heard within the receiver; after the air was withdrawn, the sound became so faint as to be hardly perceptible. The experiment will be familiar

to our readers, but it was not the less a successful effort of imagination at the time.

Dr. Tyndall, as is his wont, carries it further. After exhausting the receiver as perfectly as possible, he allows hydrogen gas—which is fourteen times lighter than air—to enter the vessel. The sound of the bell is not sensibly augmented by the presence of this attenuated gas, even when the receiver is full of it. By working the pump, the atmosphere round the bell is rendered still more attenuated. In this way a vacuum is obtained more perfect than that of Hawksbee; which is important, for it is the last traces of air that are chiefly effective in this experiment. The hammer is then seen pounding the bell, but no sound is audible. An ear placed against the exhausted receiver is unable to hear the faintest tinkle. Note, however, that the bell is suspended by strings; for if it were allowed to rest upon the plate of the air-pump, the vibrations would communicate themselves to the plate and be transmitted to the air outside. All that can be heard by the most concentrated attention, with the ear placed against the receiver, is a feeble thud, due to the transmission of the shock of the hammer through the strings which support the bell. On permitting air to enter the jar with as little noise as possible, a feeble sound is immediately heard, growing louder as the air becomes more dense, until every person assembled in the lecture-room distinctly hears the ringing of the bell.

But this is not all. At great elevations in the atmosphere, where the air is rarer than at the level of the sea, sound is sensibly diminished in loudness. Dr. Tyndall imagines the consequences of talking in an atmosphere considerably thinner than that which usually surrounds us.

"The voice," he informs us, "is formed by urging air from the lungs through an organ called the larynx. In its passage it is thrown into vibration by the vocal chords, which thus generate sound. But when I fill my lungs with hydrogen, and endeavour to speak, the sound is weakened in a remarkable degree. The consequence is very curious. You have already formed a notion of the strength and quality of my voice. I now empty my lungs of air, and inflate them with hydrogen from this gasholder. I try to speak vigorously, but my voice has lost wonderfully in power, and changed wonderfully in quality. You hear it, hollow, harsh, and unearthly: I cannot otherwise describe it."

Cases like this justify us in calling science, romance reduced to practice. It is easily conceivable that scientific conceptions may be something more than mere figments of the fancy. A thing imagined need not be a figment at all; it need not be a lie, the thing which is not. Its truth or its falsity is tested by experiment, resulting in the discovery of fact. From this bold essay of hydrogen as a conversational medium is deduced the axiom: the intensity of a sound depends on the density of the air in which the sound is generated, and not on that of the air in which it is heard.

The importance of imagination as an auxiliary to science is particularly manifested by the short-comings of science in consequence of insufficient aid from imagination. How many discoveries have, over and over again, been all but discovered before they were actually and finally attained! How often has fancy's airy wing failed for want of just a little more strength! The first inventors of block-printing never dreamt of movable types. Similar cases are so plentiful, that they would furnish the materials of a curious paper. From time immemorial it has been known that heat was generated by motion, especially by the motions of friction and impact. Nobody can say when people first warmed their hands by rubbing them together, or what savage first produced fire by the friction of suitable pieces of wood. A rifle-bullet, while pursuing its course, is warmed by the friction of the air; there has even been talk of cooking eggs by friction, by whirling them round in the air in a sling. You may warm a bit of cold iron by beating it with a cold hammer on a cold anvil. A horse's iron shoe is made hotter than the horse's foot by quick trotting over a cold stone pavement. All this heat was attributed to the accumulation of caloric, a subtle fluid, the fluid of heat.

Count Rumford was one of the first to propound, in 1798, the theory regarding the nature of heat which is now universally admitted by men of science. The suggestive fact which led to it—as the falling apple led Newton to universal gravitation—was the large amount of heat developed in the process of boring cannon at Munich. To test his idea, he contrived an apparatus for the generation of heat by friction, and with it succeeded in actually boiling water, originally at a temperature of sixty degrees Fahrenheit, in two hours and a half. "It would be difficult," he says, "to de-

scribe the surprise and astonishment expressed in the countenances of the by-standers on seeing so large a quantity of water heated, and actually made to boil, without any fire." Dr. Tyndall, being short of time, produced the same effect, by similar means, on a small quantity of water, in two minutes and a half.

The electric telegraph is perhaps the thing which has most frequently missed the consummation of discovery. In 1732, it was prefigured in the shape of a desirable and perhaps possible talisman. Indeed, talismans and amulets often express anxious longings after ends which we now either know to be impossible, or which we have either partially or completely realised. Express trains, for instance, are not bad substitutes for the flying carpet of the Arabian Nights. Now Father Lebrun (in his Histoire critique des Pratiques superstitieuses qui ont séduit les Peuples, et embarrassé les Savants) records the employment of the magnet as a means of conversing at a distance. "I have heard say several times that certain persons have interchanged secret communications by means of two magnetic needles. Two friends took each a compass, around which were engraved the letters of the alphabet, and, they pretend, when one of the friends made the needle point to any letter, the other needle, although distant several leagues, immediately turned to the same letter. I do not answer for the fact; I only know that several persons, as Salmut, have believed it possible, and that several persons have refuted this error."

This "error" is nothing less than the electric telegraph, minus the batteries and the conducting wires.

Aldini, again, in his Essai Théorique et Experimentale sur le Galvanisme, published in 1804, hit upon a veritable electric telegraph without knowing it. His object was to ascertain whether a galvanic shock could be transmitted through the sea. It had already been effected through the waters of the Lake of Geneva by Swiss, and through those of the Thames by English philosophers. Happening to visit Calais, he laid down a wire from a battery on the end of the west jetty to the platform of Fort-Rouge, now demolished. The effects of the battery fixed on the jetty were felt, not only by living persons stationed on the platform, but even recently slain animals betrayed by their contractions the fact that they had received the message sent from the distant battery. In this suggestive experiment (and we now wonder how people could be so dull) all that was wanted to constitute the telegraph were the dial-plates at each end of the wire.

Dr. Tyndall's discourse, however, applies itself rather to theory than to its practical application. A correct theory is the key to knowledge; starting from that, the consequences are sure. But without imagination, no theory is possible. Scientific education, he everywhere insists, ought to teach us to see the invisible, as well as the visible, in nature; to picture, with the eye of the mind, those operations which entirely elude the eye of the body; to look at the very atoms of matter, in motion and at rest, and to follow them forth, without ever losing sight of them, into the world of the senses, and see them there integrating themselves in natural phenomena.

Most needful to be pictured on the retina of the mind are the pulsations which pervade all nature. By means of pulsations in ether, we see; by pulsations in the air, we hear; by nervous pulsation, we taste, smell, and feel; by pulsations of the heart, we live. Existence is made up of fits and starts, intermittent though regular, and not the less real for being so rapid that our senses perceive but few of their intervals. It is the eye of the mind only which can realise them clearly.

Most happily does Dr. Tyndall select, as his principal illustration of the Scientific Use of the Imagination, the undulatory theory of light. Light, which is the synonym of perception and intelligence, is, we now feel thoroughly assured, the result of a mechanism utterly and absolutely imperceptible by our senses. It is the consequence of pulsations or waves in a subtle ether pervading all space. But we only know the ether intellectually. No one has ever compressed it, so as to make it tangible, nor revealed its presence by chemical tests. No one has ever felt it blow on his cheek, or seen the lightest film of down displaced by its currents. The ether itself is far beyond our ken: and yet we know that it must exist, because we see, and witness the phenomena of light and vision, which, in many instances, are only a repetition, in another form, of the phenomena of sound.

It is difficult to state the case, even briefly, without borrowing not only Dr. Tyndall's thoughts, but in great measure his very words. Sound travels through different media with different velocities. In water, it is propagated at the rate of

four thousand seven hundred feet a second, whereas the wave-motion in water (like that produced by the fall of a heavy raindrop on a tranquil pond) is propagated at a rate which does not amount to a foot a second. Gravity and inertia are the agents by which this wave-motion is produced; whilst in the case of the sound-pulse, it is the elasticity of the water that is the urging force.

But water is not necessary to the conduction of sound; air is its most common vehicle. And when air possesses the particular density and elasticity corresponding to the temperature of freezing water, it is known that the velocity of sound in it is one thousand and ninety feet a second—almost exactly one-fourth of the velocity in water: the reason being that, although the greater weight of the water tends to diminish the velocity, the enormous molecular elasticity of the liquid far more than atones for the disadvantage due to weight. Now, we have a tolerably clear idea of the phenomena of sound. By various contrivances, we can compel the vibrations of the air to declare themselves; we know the length and frequency of sonorous waves. We can abolish one sound by another. We know the physical meaning of music and noise, of harmony and discord. In short, as regards sound, we have precise ideas of the physical processes by which special sensations are excited in our ears.

In these phenomena we travel a very little way from downright sensible experience. But still the imagination is brought into play, to some extent. We construct in thought the waves of sound which we cannot see with our bodily eye, and we believe as firmly in their existence as in that of the air itself. But, having mastered the cause and mechanism of sound, we desire to know the cause and mechanism of light. Here we have to call upon that expansive, almost creative power of the human intellect, which we call the imagination. In the case now before us, it is manifested by our transplanting into space, for the purposes of light, a modified form of the mechanism of sound.

We know on what the velocity of sound depends. When we lessen the density of a medium, and preserve its elasticity constant, we augment the velocity. When we heighten the elasticity, and keep the density constant, we also augment the velocity. A small density, therefore, and a great elasticity, are the two things necessary to rapid propagation.

Now light is known to move with the astounding velocity of one hundred and eighty-five thousand miles a second. How is such a velocity to be attained? By boldly diffusing in space a medium of the requisite tenuity and elasticity!

Accordingly, philosophers have made such a medium their starting-point, endowing it with one or two other necessary qualities; handling it in accordance with strict mechanical laws; and thus transferring it from the world of imagination to the world of sense, and trying whether the final result be not the very phenomena of light which ordinary knowledge and skilled experiment reveal. If, in all the multiplied varieties of these phenomena, including those of the most remote and entangled description, this fundamental conception always brings them face to face with the truth; if no contradiction to their deductions from it be found in external nature; if, moreover, it has actually forced upon their attention phenomena which no eye had previously seen, and which no mind had previously imagined; if, by it, they find themselves gifted with a power of prescience which has never failed when brought to an experimental test;—such a conception, which never disappoints them, but always lands them on the solid shores of fact, must, they think, be something more than a mere figment of the scientific fancy. It is impossible to come to any other conclusion than that reason and imagination, by their united action, have led them into an invisible world, which is not a bit less real than the world of the senses.

Imagination, then, in one brilliant instance, has guided us to one of the grandest physical facts. But this universal medium, this light-ether as it is called, is a vehicle, not an origin, of wave-motion. It receives and transmits, but it does not create. The motion it conveys is derived, for the most part, from luminous bodies. The scientific imagination, which is here authoritative, demands, as the origin and cause of a series of ether-waves, a particle of vibrating matter, quite as definite as, though incomparably smaller than, that which gives origin to a musical sound. Such a particle is named an atom, or a molecule, and is, we think, by no means difficult to imagine.

Acting on our retina, the different light-waves produce the sensation of different colours. Red, for example, is produced by the largest waves, violet by the smallest;

whilst green and blue are produced by waves of intermediate length and amplitude. We may compare their differences of magnitude to the billows of the ocean and the ripples of a pond. The shingle that would stop the one would have no perceptible effect on the other. Now, suppose a number of minute particles, like the motes which dance in sunbeams, to be suspended in the atmosphere. It will be admitted that, like the pebbles on a beach, they may have some influence on the smaller waves of light.

The sky is blue; which indicates a deficiency on the part of the larger waves. In accounting for the colour of the sky, the first question suggested by analogy would undoubtedly be, "Is not the air blue?" The blueness of the air has, in fact, been given as a solution of the blueness of the sky. But reason, basing itself on observation, asks in reply, "How, if the air be blue, can the light of sunrise and sunset, which travels through vast distances of air, be yellow, orange, and even red?" The passage of the white solar light through a blue medium could, by no possibility, redden the light. The hypothesis of a blue air is therefore untenable. In fact, the agent, whatever it is, which sends us the light of the sky, exercises, in so doing, a double action. The light reflected is blue, the light transmitted is orange or red.

But it is known that infinitely small particles, suspended in a medium, give it a blue tint, when seen by reflected light. There are glasses which show a bright yellow by transmitted, and a beautiful blue by reflected light. A trace of soap in water gives it a tint of blue, as does the steeping in it of a fresh shred of horse-chestnut bark. London milk makes an approximation to the same colour, through the operation of the same cause; and Helmholtz has irreverently disclosed the fact that a blue eye is simply a turbid medium.

The minuteness of the particles which produce our azure sky must be left entirely to imagination. From their perviousness to stellar light, and other considerations, Sir John Herschel drew some startling conclusions respecting the density and weight of the comets. We know that their tails often fill spaces immensely larger than the whole earth, whose diameter is only eight thousand miles. Both it and our sky, and a good space beyond the sky, would certainly be included in a sphere ten thousand miles across, three hundred thousand of which spheres would be required to make up a handsome comet's tail. Now, suppose the whole of this cometary matter to be swept together, and suitably compressed, what do we suppose its volume would be? Sir John Herschel would tell us that the whole mass of this cometary rubbish might be carted away at a single effort by a single dray-horse. Perhaps even a donkey might do the work.

After this, we may entertain Dr. Tyndall's notion concerning the quantity of matter in our sky. Suppose a shell to surround the earth at a height above the surface which would place it beyond the grosser matter that hangs in the lower regions of the air—say at the height of the Matterhorn or Mont Blanc. Outside this shell we have the deep blue firmament. Let the atmospheric space beyond the shell be swept clean, and let the sky matter be properly gathered up. What is its probable amount? Dr. Tyndall has thought that a lady's portmanteau; nay, even that a gentleman's portmanteau—possibly his snuff-box—might take it all in. But whether the actual sky be capable of this amount of condensation or not, he entertains no doubt that a sky quite as vast as ours, and as good in appearance, could be formed from a quantity of matter which might be held in the hollow of the hand.

After this, the sky may fall, without making us quake about broken bones.

FREDERICUS REX (OLD FRITZ).

BY WILLIBALD ALEXIS.

(A FAVOURITE SONG IN THE PRUSSIAN CAMP.)

FREDERICUS REX, our King and our Lord,
He called to his soldiers to buckle on sword,
Two hundred battalions, of squadrons ten score,
And to each man some sixty cartouches or more.

"You rascals!" His Majesty was pleased to say,
"Like men every one you serve me to-day;
They grudge me Silesia, the Grafschaft of Glatz,
And the one hundred millions locked up in our Platz.

"The Empress and French are in league as I find,
And the Empire of Rome with the pair has combined;
The Russians have fallen on Prussian land, too,
Up and show them what Prussians in earnest can do.

"My Generals Schwerin and Field-Marshal Keith,
With Ziethen, are ready and armed to the teeth;
Potz Mohren, Blitz, Hagel, French look to your ears,
You little know Fritz and his old Grenadiers.

"Now, Louisa, adieu! Don't cry; never fear,
Some bullets fly crooked remember, my dear;
If each bullet went straight and plump into its mark,
We kings should be soon left alone in the dark.

"The musket-ball makes but a little round hole,
The cannon-ball knocks apart body and soul;
The bullets are all made of iron and lead,
Yet many a shot misses many a head.

"Their guns of calibre are smaller and fewer;
From Prussia the foe get no cannon, be sure,
The Swedes have such cursed bad money, you know;
What the Austrians have, time will speedily show."

Fredericus Rex, whom the laurel wreath crowns,
If you'd only but now and then plunder some towns;
Fredericus Rex, ere your banner was furled,
We'd chase you the devil clean out of the world.

SIX MONTHS IN THE EAST.

THE DEAD SEA, THE JORDAN, AND JERICHO.

EXACTLY eighteen days before the Christmas experience recorded last,* I bathed in the Dead Sea; and bathing there produces as novel a sensation as if you found yourself suddenly endowed with wings, and emulating the feats of a tumbler-pigeon in mid-air. You become a clumsy float, a top-heavy buoy, a swollen cork, the instant you are in its waters, and arms, legs, and body are apparently endowed with the strangest qualities. It is as if heavy weights were affixed to each directly you attempt to move, and experienced swimmers fail in their best strokes, by reason of the unnatural buoyancy with which they have to contend. Your limbs are on the surface, and you cleave the air with your hands, the moment you try to swim, and the man who would be drowned as soon as he was out of his depth, in any other sheet of water in the world, is the one best fitted for bathing in the Dead Sea. He cannot sink in it, let him do what he will. It is as if he were encased in life-belts, or sprawling on a feather-bed. If he lean back and throw his feet up, it is exactly as if he were resting in a peculiarly well-stuffed easy-chair, with a leg-rest to match. He may fold his arms, turn on one side, lie flat upon his stomach or back, clasp his knees with both hands, or draw toes and head together, in the shape the human body would assume if crammed hastily into a jar with its extremities left out, and all with no more possibility of sinking than if he were in so much soft sand. Woe to him if he be tempted by these unusual facilities to stay long in the water with his head uncovered! The bare and rocky walls of the low-lying caldron which holds the Sea of Death reflect back the burning sun and concentrate its rays; and a coup de soleil will be the all but inevitable consequence of his imprudence. Two of our party entered the water, and remained in it for some seconds before they re-covered their heads, and the result was severe shooting-pains, sickness, and dizziness, which lasted until their immersion an hour later in the refreshing waters of the Jordan. Woe, too, to the inexperienced stranger who, following his rule in other bathing, dips his head as well as his body into the Dead Sea. Inflamed eyes and nostrils, together with hair and beard laden with acrid salts, are among the penalties of his rashness; while if he taste its waters he becomes acquainted with a greater concentration of nastiness than had entered into his imagination before. In buoyancy and bitterness the Sea of Sodom exceeded all we had heard or read respecting it; but in some other particulars our anticipations were falsified surprisingly. We looked for gloom, and we found brightness; we had imagined turbid waters, and we found a lake exquisitely clear and delicately blue; we expected perfect silence, and an unbroken waste, and we found the birds singing sweetly among the tamarisks and oleanders, which spring up wherever a stream finds its way from the mountains to mingle with the mysterious inland sea. There was an Arab encampment near its shore; camels and sheep were munching the green leaves, and a woman came from her tent to fill her pitchers at the muddy stream whose course we followed as we cantered down. It was nearly mid-day, and we had been in the saddle since seven that morning, our journey having been one long descent from the convent of Mar Sâba. Again and again we seemed to have turned the last stony defile, and to be about to enter the open space in the centre of which the Cities of the Plain once stood; and again and again did the precipitous bridle-path twine like some tortuous river, only to show us another stage of the tedious and hazardous descent. We had been met at Mar Sâba by an armed guard, whom Alee had engaged for our protection against the lawless tribes who wander through this region, and, with him as our pioneer, we rode through the burning heat, literally panting for the double bathe in store for us.

Our guard, one of a large family who live by protecting the travellers who visit the wild districts about the Dead Sea, was armed to the teeth, and was strikingly handsome. Has the reader ever taken the trouble to analyse the costumes which look so splendidly picturesque in David Roberts's or Carl Haag's paintings, and to ascertain the causes which go to make up their individual effect? I found it impossible to avoid doing this in the East, where every figure looks as if it had stepped bodily from some gorgeous

* See ALL THE YEAR ROUND, New Series, vol. v., p. 84.

canvas, and as if the disposal of draperies and the harmonious combination of colour had been the subject of laborious care. Such things are instinctive with the Oriental, and the faces and figures one meets in Egypt and Syria first astonish and delight, and finally suggest the question: How are these marvellously artistic results brought about? Our guard furnished a capital case in point. A six-barrelled silver-mounted revolver, "backsheesh present from French masters mee guide," was stuck in one side of his belt, with its decorated handle and shining barrels exposed. This was flanked by a long duelling pistol, "backsheesh from 'Merican master mee guide," and supported by dirks and a huge Damascus sabre. A loose white linen robe reaching from the neck to the feet, and garnished with crimson belts and sashes, had over it a wide-spreading cloak; and these would, but for an accident, have been credited with the striking general effect produced. On riding, however, through the dreary waste forming the site of Jericho, we all lost our head-dresses in turn. The far-reaching branches discrowned us, as our horses were shouldering their way through the densely thick shrubs and prickly foliage, and the artistic mystery of the guard's dress was solved upon the instant. Let the reader take a large square silk handkerchief, of gay, bright colours, fold it half corner-wise, as ladies do their shawls, and place it on his head. Let him then add a double cord of worsted rope, about the thickness of an old-fashioned bell-pull, which shall fit tightly round the crown and over this handkerchief, in such a way that the forehead has a square top-covering, while the sides of the face, and the whole of the neck, are shrouded in silk, which falls down to the shoulders in streaming ends. On doing thus, by far the most picturesque item in an Oriental dress is secured. The few seconds during which our guide's striped silk handkerchief (or keyfea) was in the tree told the whole story. We saw a common, rather sordid face, and a bullet-head, on which the closely cropped black hair suggested the House of Correction, in place of the dignified Arab beauty we had all admired. The Speaker without his wig, the Lord Chancellor in a shooting-coat, are figures which faintly convey the contrast between our Oriental with and without his head-dress. The whole secret of costume seemed solved, for we saw that in a pictorial sense a gaudy silk handkerchief, tastefully arranged, made the difference between a Saladin and an armed clown.

The frontispiece to the Talisman, in the Favourite Edition of the Waverley Novels, represents the convent of Mar Sâba and the rugged grandeur of its site. If the reader has the volume at hand let him study this picture well, for there is nothing else like the place portrayed, in Palestine or the world. Its church, courts, cells, and chambers are built up and let into the caves and ridges of a lofty precipice, so that you cannot determine how much of the formidable structure before you is natural and how much the work of man. This precipice is faced by another, equally perpendicular and high, so that the holy house of Mar Sâba stands on the side of a roofless tunnel, the walls of which are above, and below, and opposite. The only situation at all like it is the mythical dwelling of one of the Children of the Mist, pointed out to the tourist in the Highlands as he looks up, half shudderingly, on his passage through the gloomy Glencoe. The house of Mar Sâba is far more like a fortress than a convent, and its monks still adopt many of the precautions of a state of siege. No woman and no Bedouin is permitted to cross its threshold, and our little party was inspected minutely from a carefully guarded loophole while our credentials were read, and before the narrow and ponderous iron door turned slowly on its hinges, and we were permitted to enter. We found ourselves in a small court-yard, strongly guarded, and were conducted subsequently over a wilderness of cells, refectories, flat roofs, hospital wards, chapels, and ancient cells. Some were mere natural caves, others were holes scooped by hand out of the solid rock, and others, again, such as the church, with its enormous buttresses, dome, and clock-turret, were elaborate specimens of ornate architecture. On looking out there was nothing but an enormous chasm to be seen, and it seemed as if we were at the end of the world. The monks looked dazed and feeble-minded, as if the utter solitude and gloomy grandeur had been too much for their minds, though the one who conducted us round was, perhaps from frequent performance of similar duties as guest-master, both garrulous and bland. From a small open terrace, about the size of a hearth-rug, we looked to right and left, up and down the awful space below us, while our host, uttering a peculiarly shrill cry, brought what looked like a grey mouse from its hiding-place in the rocks. Th

mouse was a fox, which looked up cunningly for the bread thrown to him, and the good father explained, that thus feeding the wild foxes and jackals of the ravine formed the chief amusement of his leisure. We had much talk concerning the holy St. Sabas, the founder of the convent, a native of Cappadocia, who flourished in the fifth century, and, by his reputation for extraordinary sanctity, drew thousands after him into this dreary glen. The precipice opposite to us is riddled with holes, each of which was once the lair, not of a wild beast, but of a recluse, who believed himself to be serving God by leading a life of useless solitude. There are no pathways or other modes of approach to these very ineligible residences. They are sheer holes in an upright wall, and our monk laid quite an unctuous stress on the statement that those who lived and died there were let down severally in baskets, and never afterwards returned to the upper world. Their only means of subsistence, he insisted, was the charity of the pilgrims who flocked hither from all parts of the world, and who let down contributions of bread and fruit, until a day came when the basket was not emptied, nor an answering pull given to the rope from above, and then the word went round that one more holy father had, after ten, or fifteen, or twenty years of death in life, departed finally, and that his late hole was ready for another tenant. We saw hundreds of these caves here, and next day in the rocky sides of Quarantania, known as the Mountain of the Temptation, and, as each of them represented a succession of empty lives, which had in their time been quoted as examples to the ignorant and credulous, we numbered them among the many shockingly melancholy sights of Palestine.

The past history and present surroundings of the convent are in accordance with its appearance, and justify its precautions and fortress look. It was attacked and conquered by the Persians in the seventh century, and its monks murdered; it was frequently stormed during the fierce struggles of the Crusaders, and it is now one of the richest convents in the Holy Land, with a church stocked with gold and silver ornaments, a valuable library, which includes rare manuscripts, and priceless relics in the shape of piled-up bones of murdered saints, in the very centre of a district infested by the wildest Bedouins. No wonder, then, that the monks keep a strict guard, and that the convent is made as difficult of access as the original lion's den in which St. Sabas dwelt, and which was the germ of the entire building.

We rode from Mar Sâba to the Dead Sea along a road which becomes, as I have said, wilder and more rugged at every stage. The white-domed tomb, which the Mahomedans insist is that of Moses, and which is quoted triumphantly whenever the biblical statement as to the place of his sepulture being unknown is named, was the only building we saw. It crowns a distant hill, and Alee pointed it out whenever we came to a break in the tremendous natural walls which hemmed us in. The ridges and dried-up channels we traversed are dangerous, from the vantage points they furnish to the robber and assassin. Sometimes we found ourselves threading a narrow road, with lofty precipices on each side of it, which rose almost perpendicularly to the sky, and from the summit of which a marksman could have picked us off with certainty, or have disabled us by the simple process of hurling down a fragment of rock. At others, we came upon an open table-land, and our guard rode on to meet the wild figures which had been watching us from a safe ambush, and were now holding an ominous conference. These savage-looking Bedouins had some of them followed us or kept us in sight for miles, not making any sign, but taking short cuts, and by their superior knowledge of the country, doubling on us, and preparing, as it seemed, for parley or attack. Our guard always took the first opportunity of riding straight at them, and was in familiar conversation before they could recover from their surprise. He would explain that the Frank excellencies he had charge of were powerful, but good, and that he was personally responsible for their safety. The Bedouins looked dubious, but he named his father, their good friend, and his brother, who brought a party of travellers over this very ground a few weeks ago, and then called to us in a loud voice that these were good people, who wished that we might gain our homes in safety. Salutations were gravely exchanged, but no backsheesh was given or asked for. Alee's fee to the guard included our black-mail to the wandering tribes, and though at one time we were in the centre of an encampment of fierce and hostile Bedouins who had crossed from the Moab side of the Jordan, and had to cross a plain where their camels were browsing by the thousand like sheep, we were never once molested.

For an hour after we have left the rocky

passes which guard the approaches to the plain of the Jordan we have been in sight of the Dead Sea, of the devious thread of dark green foliage marking the sacred river's course, and of the range of white and stony rock which limits the horizon. When we have bathed, and when Alee has poured the contents of the water bottles upon our heads and bodies to rid us of the rapidly incrusting slime, we start at a brisk canter over the plain for the pilgrims' bathing-place at the Jordan. We are on the ground on which Lot looked down, four thousand years ago, from the heights of Bethel, after the dispute between his and Abraham's herdsmen, when he "beheld all the plain of the Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord." There is little fertility now, the shrubs on the desolate plains have their leaves incrusted with salts; the surrounding cliffs are destitute of foliage, and the green trees which line the Jordan's banks are as a finely drawn out oasis in the wilderness. We all complain of sticky and uncomfortable sensations. The Dead Sea has left its mark upon us. The sulphurous sands and salts with which we are coated give a harsh and gritty feeling to the skin; the sun blazes down upon our heads with a fierceness to which all we have experienced in Egypt seems trivial, and the limestone rocks around, and the minute particles which float and quiver in the air, affect the eye-sight painfully. Yonder tumble-down ruin marks the site of Jericho; that tower is shown as the house of Zaccheus; the clump close to us on the right, for which Alee and the guard are making, is the bathing-place; and here, oh joy! are the cool bubbling waters of the river seen through a thicket of tamarisk, agnus-castus, willow, and poplar, and looking honestly muddy and turbid. We have had enough of the baleful beauty of waters which are at once clear and foul; it is a relief to find the Jordan (which is, hereabouts, not more than sixty feet wide) of a yellowish muddy hue, with soft, thick, chocolate-coloured soil mingling with its sandy shelving banks. The bathe we indulge in now is delicious.

Carpets, table-cloth, cold fowls, wine, and bread, were all laid out temptingly under the trees when we emerged from the thicket, cool and refreshed after our delightful bath; and it was not until evening had commenced to throw its shadows that we remounted our horses and resumed our journey. We devoted the afternoon to reading aloud, to resting under the trees, to meditation and talk on this the culminating point of interest in our tour. We strolled through the thick, luxuriant wood which borders the swiftly flowing waters. We plucked leaves and cast them into the eddies, and watched them disappear. We filled with Jordan water the half-dozen or so of tin flasks, made for that purpose, which Alee's experience among Christian tourists had led him to purchase for us in Jerusalem. We brought away a young sapling or two, and some branches of trees, and we took Dean Stanley with us, as it were, as we read of his visit here with the Prince of Wales, and how the stream before us "was the one river in Palestine, sacred in its recollections, abundant in its waters; and yet, at the same time, the river not of cities, but of the wilderness; the scene of the preaching of those who dwelt not in king's palaces, nor wore soft clothing. On the banks of the rushing stream the multitudes gathered—the priests and scribes from Jerusalem, down the pass of Adummim; the publicans from Jericho on the south, and the lake of Gennesaret on the north; the soldiers on their way from Damascus to Petra; the peasants from Galilee, with ONE from Nazareth, through the opening of the plain of Esdraleon. The tall 'reeds' or canes in the jungle waved, 'shaken by the wind;' the pebbles of the bare clay hills lay around, to which the Baptist pointed as capable of being transformed into the children of Abraham; at their feet rushed the refreshing stream of the never-failing river. There," where we stood, "began that sacred rite which has since spread throughout the world, through the vast baptistries of the southern and Oriental churches, gradually dwindling to the little fonts of the north and west; the plunges beneath the water diminishing to the few drops which, by a wise exercise of Christian freedom, are now in most churches the sole representative of the full stream of the Descending River."

After many warnings from Alee and the guard as to the expediency of starting without further delay, if we wished to avoid danger from Bedouins by reaching our night's resting-place before dark, we resumed our journey, and, after a brisk ride of an hour and a half across the arid plain, arrived at Rhia (Jericho) and the tents. Rhia is a squalid village situated on the site of the ancient Gilgal, and we slept on the spot where the Israelites first pitched their tents

in the Land of Promise, "having rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off them." After dark, Arab villagers, who are inconceivably shameful and dirty, assembled round our tent-doors, and danced and sang before us for backsheesh, the women and men keeping in separate gangs. They were more degraded and repulsive than anything human we had yet seen, and in their shrieks and cries, their monotonous nasal choruses, their undisguised coarseness, and unpleasant gestures, suggested condemned spirits from some lower world, glorying in their wickedness and shame. These be strong words, but a reference to Murray will show that I do not overstate the case against the dwellers in Rhia, who seem to have inherited the curse pronounced against their ancient forerunners, who succumbed to Joshua and the host of Israel. For "Jericho, the city of palms," "high and fenced up to heaven," stood here; though there is not a stone of it remaining, nor a single tree of the stately groves from which it gained its name. Some ruined sugar factories, which are said to date from the Crusades, are the oldest buildings near. So recently as 1838, a solitary palm-tree marked the forest's site; but we saw nothing but thorn and balsams as we gazed round the oasis of tangled shrubs and trees through which we had ridden. The view is refreshing and delightful, for the luxuriant greenwood continues up to the lofty range, in the centre of which is the Mountain of the Temptation. This green line follows the course of the stream of pure water, which bubbles from the rock to spread verdure and freshness in its track. We referred to our authorities, and ascending a huge mound of rubbish we examined the country around as easily as if it were an open map. We fully comprehended now the strategical importance of the city of Jericho to the Israelites in the first stage of the conquest of Palestine. It stood at the entrance of the main passes from the Jordan valley into the interior of the country, "the one to the south-west leading to Olivet, which commands the approach to Jerusalem; the other to the north-west, towards Michmash, which commands the approach to Ai and Bethel." It thus formed the key of Palestine to the invaders. In yonder romantic range of rugged limestone cliffs Joshua's spies took refuge, after leaving the house of Rahab; on this hill of Gilgal the Tabernacle was kept during years of conflict, and until it was removed to Shiloh; here, Samuel and Saul met often; and here, too, Jericho was rebuilt. After this rebuilding Elijah and Elisha, and other prophets, flourished here; from yonder river banks the former disappeared, and there, where the foliage grows thicker, is the fountain which the latter healed, and which bears his name to this day. Through Jericho, as restored by the Romans, our Lord passed on his final journey to Jerusalem; and it was its palm groves and balsam gardens which Herod purchased from Cleopatra, and upon which he erected the dwellings whose luxury and magnificence became proverbial. We visited mound after mound of rubbish as we talked over these things, and found many traces of the work performed by Captain Warren and his staff on behalf of the Palestine Exploration Fund.

Next morning we rode from Jericho up to Jerusalem in five hours, by passes which have been infested by banditti from the time of the Good Samaritan downwards, and we saw and heard more of the usefulness and importance of labours which have impressed us strongly, ever since we set foot in the Holy Land. I leave it to others to point out the urgent needs which the Palestine Exploration Fund is so well calculated to supply, to explain its objects, and detail its progress. I content myself with testifying to what we actually saw of its heavy and conscientious work. This is so manifest and important, that one heard of labours being suspended and circumscribed, for want of funds, with absolute pain. If it be remembered that "many of the ancient and peculiar customs of Palestine are fast vanishing before the increasing tide of western manners, and in a short time the exact meaning of many things which find their correspondences in the Bible will have perished," and that our information respecting the geology, the botany, the zoology, and the meteorology of the Holy Land is still most imperfect, such work as we saw in progress should be felt as a necessity by a Bible-loving nation. Palestine is not larger than Wales, and the city of Jerusalem would stand in Hyde Park, so that, the half-contemptuous permission of the Turkish government having been obtained, there should be no bar to the complete exploration of both. The urgent need is for means. Scholars and men of science, reverent, accomplished, indefatigable, are eager to resume and extend researches from which so much is to be hoped; and as we left the City of Sorrows, where the Crescent flaunts above the

Cross, and departed from the degraded Land of Promise, where the Infidel reigns supreme, our strongest feeling was one of hope that the Christian men and women of England would not inflict an additional blow upon this fallen region, by crying "Hold!" to work which has a broader human interest than aught which has transpired in Judæa since the days of our Lord. Even now, when the traveller there is at every disadvantage—when he is compelled to see through a glass darkly—what a flood of light his pilgrimage throws upon the most familiar passages in his Bible! He finds new meanings. He discerns beauties and analogies previously hidden. But bring him face to face with the buried and neglected treasures of that wondrous land, give him the clear pure rays for which the representatives of the Exploration Fund are striving, and a new era will commence for Christendom, for the sacred story will be illuminated with a radiance which will shine throughout the world, and make all preceding commentaries seem dull and cold.

A YORKSHIRE COLONY.

Within a few miles of Bradford stands an establishment which is unique in this country, and, I believe, in the world. This is Saltaire, the factory of Sir Titus Salt. I said factory, but colony is the better word, for surely a town containing four thousand inhabitants, a church, a cemetery, an infirmary, a noble mechanics' institute, a capital club, a large school for the children, and a huge refreshment-room, all instituted and carried on under regulations laid down by one who is at the same time the founder, the ruler, and the guiding spirit of the place, deserves the grander name.

I was told that I ought not to leave Bradford without seeing Saltaire, and having received a courteous reply to my request for permission not merely to see, but to describe, the establishment, I started off thither one bright autumnal morning by the little railway which runs from Bradford to Skipton, and on which Saltaire is the second station. Of the origin, rise, and progress of the place, I had heard something. I knew that the great speciality of the factory was the dealing with alpaca wool, which, though long favourably regarded as a fabric, and often experimented upon in the neighbourhood of Bradford, had never been successfully treated until Sir Titus, then Mr. Salt, a Bradford manufacturer in a not very large way, devoted himself to the question, and as Mr. James, in his most readable history of worsted manufactures, tell us, "finally overcame the difficulties of preparing and spinning alpaca wool so as to produce a true and even thread, and, by combining it with cotton warps, improved the manufacture so as to make it one of the staple industries of the kingdom." The experiment was so successful, and Mr. Salt's business so largely increased, that he found it expedient to draw together the work, which he was carrying on at two or three small factories in Bradford, into one large building, and entertaining, as he did, certain large-hearted, though thoroughly practical, views as to the mutual relation of master and servants, he determined upon founding the colony of Saltaire. Eighteen years ago this intention was carried out, and during the whole of that time, and up to the present hour, constant exertions have been made, not merely to extend and improve the business, but to ameliorate the bodily and mental condition of those by whom the business is carried on. It is only fair to say, from personal observations, that these exertions have in every way met with distinguished and well-merited success.

As without the factory the colony would never have been called into existence, our first attention shall be given to that establishment. The factory, which is admirably situated for purposes of commerce, between the Leeds and Liverpool canal, and the Bradford and Skipton railway, and is in close proximity to the river Aire, from which the water for the working is supplied, covers twelve acres of ground, is six stories high, five hundred and fifty feet long, fifty feet wide, and seventy-two feet high. The walls, which are of enormous thickness, are supported by arches on iron pillars; the roof is of cast iron, and the whole building is fire-proof. The various kinds of wool used here are alpaca, Botany, or Australian wool, Russian, and mohair. The Botany wool, the best of which comes from Van Diemen's Land, is softer and finer than any other. It arrives in bales of about seventy pounds weight, closely packed by hydraulic pressure. These bales are loosened by being heated, and the wool is then sorted, washed, and dried by heat, carded, and combed, and finally goes through the process of spinning and weaving. The wool, in its original state, is either black, brown, or grey, but it is capable of being dyed almost any colour in the dyeing-house, which

forms part of the premises. The weaving, combing, and carding machines are said to be as perfect as human ingenuity has hitherto devised, and, indeed, any one, however ignorant of mechanism, would be struck by an inspection of the weaving-room, which extends the whole length of the extensive buildings, where the eye gets dazed at the enormous perspective of machinery in motion, while the ear is deafened by its clang. In carrying out the various processes of manufacture, upwards of four thousand hands, men, women, and children, are employed. Nearly all of them reside on the premises, as it is called, that is to say, in the town lying adjacent to the works, which has been built expressly by Sir Titus Salt for his workmen. The neat stone houses are built in broad, well-paved, well-lighted streets, each called by the name of a member of the founder's family, and are let out at very moderate rents.

Across the road, and immediately opposite to the factory, stands the chapel, a handsome, substantial building, with a gilt spike surmounting its cupola, which gives it an odd and decidedly foreign appearance. The interior of this church—it has been built about ten years—is remarkably handsome; the roof is supported by splendid marble pillars, and the balustrades around the railed-off space, where in our church would be the altar (the worship at Saltaire is congregational), are of the same material. The building is warmed with hot-water pipes, and lighted with gas, and in its air of comfort contrasts pleasantly with the ordinary chapels to be found attached to public establishments. There is service twice a day, morning and evening, and the officiating minister, and the organist, who has a splendid instrument, are retained solely for the benefit of the Saltaire congregation. Adjoining the chapel is the very handsome marble mausoleum of the Salt family, which, two days previous to my visit, had received its second tenant. In the immediate neighbourhood is the dining-hall, an enormous room partitioned off into boxes on the old coffee-house model, and with extensive kitchens in its rear. The design of this establishment is, that, while the provisions are sold at the lowest possible rate, the affair should be self-supporting, and its frequenters should not find any loss of independence in patronising it. This feeling is frankly expressed on a large painted board, which also sets forth the remarkably low tariff. A plate of meat and potatoes can be had for twopence, and I calculated that an elaborate meal, including soup, meat, vegetables, pudding, and lemonade, would not cost more than sixpence. It is one of the regulations that the provisions should be fresh every day, and with a view to this end, all that is unconsumed during the day is sold in the evening at a very low price to the poorer members of the community. It is to be noted that neither beer nor spirituous liquors are permitted to be sold here.

The colony has also its baths and washhouses, on an elaborate scale. A large room on the ground floor is fitted up with the usual apparatus of coppers and tubs, and contains a fine wringing machine which, worked by steam, makes more than one hundred and fifty revolutions per minute. There are two different classes of baths, both being decidedly comfortable, and one almost luxurious. In the first class, where the dressing-rooms are as well-fitted and furnished as in any London establishment, the price of a warm bath is sixpence, of a cold bath threepence. There is also a Turkish bath, which, as I was told, is extensively patronised by the operatives.

Proceeding by the bridge which crosses the railway, and ascending the main street of the little town, we came upon a large building in course of erection. This building, which, when completed, will have cost twenty thousand pounds, is a mechanics' institute, or, as Sir Titus Salt more wisely chooses to call it, the Working Men's Club of Saltaire. It will contain a library and reading-room, various class-rooms, two lecture-halls, the larger to contain seven hundred, the smaller one hundred and fifty persons, while the larger portion of the basement will be set aside as a gymnasium. The handsome buildings immediately opposite are the schools for the children of the colonists—one for boys, the other for girls—large, lofty, well-ventilated rooms, with spacious playing-yards attached. Threepence per week per head is all that a parent is called upon to pay to provide his children with an excellent education, while there is what the Germans call a kinder garten, or nursery school, to which a mother can send her smallest encumbrance, with the knowledge that it is well looked after, while she herself pursues her work.

We have seen how the children are taught and reared, and how admirably the bodily and mental welfare of the adult population is looked after at Saltaire. Let us now see what provision is made for

sickness and old age, those dread visitants whose approach is not to be averted even from this happy colony. All that can be done is to soften the rigour of their attacks; and that this has been done in the most considerate manner is at once proved to us. This solid block of building standing by itself is the infirmary, and the door is opened by a neatly dressed matron, the mere sight of whose bright, cheerful face, the mere sound of whose soft, clear voice, must be beneficial to an invalid. Here is the surgery and dispensary, fitted and furnished in quite a nautical manner as regards the economy of its space and the way in which every available inch of wall and cupboard has been made use of; here is the operating-room, with that horrible expanding couch, which is common to all such places. Up-stairs are what we should call the wards, but what are really the brightest and most cheerful little apartments for the patients. At the head of each bedstead is the usual official certificate of the case and dietary table, a bell to summon the nurse, and a couple of strong ropes and pulleys pendent from the ceiling, to aid the patient in raising himself in bed. I noticed that the books on the shelves adjacent to the beds were not of the usual sombre and somniferous character, that the walls were covered with pictures of a much higher order than is usual in such places, and that the illuminated texts hanging here and there were calculated to inculcate hope, rather than terror. Throughout the whole place cleanliness, cheerfulness, and order reigned supreme, nor can I fancy a more comfortable home in illness, or one affording a better chance for speedy recovery, than the infirmary at Saltaire. As we passed out my guide noticed as a novelty an elaborate invalid's bath-chair, and the nurse told us that one of Sir Titus Salt's sons had just had it sent down from London for the use of the patients when convalescent.

A little higher up, in the best situation on the crest of the hill, stand six houses, inhabited by the widows of those who have died in the Saltaire service. The houses consist of four rooms, with kitchen, scullery, &c., and the residents not merely live rent-free, but are provided with furniture, and receive a weekly allowance proportionate to the size of their families. Here, as in every other portion of the colony, it is expected that those who are thus helped should also help themselves, even if they can only do so by showing their obedience to the regulations, and by their observance of cleanliness and order in their households.

As I left Saltaire, the factory-bell was clanging, and the streets were filled with the "hands" returning to their work; the women with their kerchiefs round their heads; the men dressed in long, light blue smock-frocks; the children running in and out amongst them, and making the pavement echo with the rough music of their clogs. All looked prosperous and happy, and so properly do the colonists appreciate their good fortune, that the policemen, themselves colonists, are necessarily the least employed portion of the community.

THE DOCTOR'S MIXTURE.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER XXX. RESCUE.

The Red Lion at Westcup was an old-fashioned family inn, which the county families patronised. On this night it was pretty full, for a certain Mrs. Dowlais was giving a fancy ball. As Katey drove up she already saw a crowd at the door, while fantastic figures passed through it, amid derision and admiration, to get to their waiting carriages. In a moment Captain Montague was beside her. "Just a minute too late," he said. "They are coming out. I could not get a word with her." And the next moment they saw a brilliant trio emerge from the door, and come through the light: an officer of the guard in the days of Charles the Second—his crimson coat all crossed and braided with gold, boots, and flowing wig; a poor insipid-looking lady, in a dress that seemed no fancy costume at all; while on the guardsman's arm leaned a beautiful Irish Colleen Bawn, in a scarlet cloak and hood, the shortest petticoats, and altogether so dainty and piquant a figure, that the crowd looked on with admiration. The blushing Polly was beside herself, as her sister saw, with delight and pride.

Too late, then; what was to be done now? But Captain Montague was equal to the occasion. "We will follow them to the ball," he said. "You can wait in the carriage, and I will go in."

The ball was given at a showy spick-and-span mansion, a little way beyond the town, with greenhouses and gardens illuminated, and a great building of canvas and wood erected, and lit up with Chinese lanterns and devices. It was a sumptuous affair, carried out with the lavish magnifi-

cence of those opulent districts — band from London, dresses from London, decorations from London, supper and wines from London. It was scarcely wonderful that our unsophisticated Polly was dazzled by the enchantment.

The night wore on till twelve, when the captain of Charles the Second's guard came to claim her for a dance. When that was over, he took her away to explore the gardens and fairy bowers.

"Now, tell me frankly," he asked, "do you think I look well in this dress?"

Our Polly looked at him askance, then on the ground.

"Why should I tell you," she said, "what you know very well?"

"What! but you wouldn't pay me a compliment, that I know."

"Yes, I would," said she, stoutly; "and you deserve it, for procuring me such a delightful evening."

"And you are not displeased with me?"

"Displeased! Oh! what nonsense, Captain Molyneux. I shall never forget it."

"Exactly," said he. "You know I told you when you began by hating me, that you would finish by—well, by liking me."

Polly tossed her head. "Well, I don't mind telling you that you have greatly improved—that you have behaved much better of late."

"It is very good of you to say so," he answered; "but you don't know me yet; and how I have never had a chance—or a fair chance. You don't know what I would have been. But there are people who do not understand me, and whom I do not understand, which is my fault, no doubt—I am sure it is."

"No, no," said Polly, eagerly, quite affected at this generous self-reproach; "indeed it is not. The fact is, I was so hasty, for I was told so much, and warned so much about you——"

"Oh! I know—that's a matter of course. And shall I tell you now what made me first think of you with a little interest?—why, because simply I heard a good deal about you—that you were smart, and sharp, and wicked."

"Who could have said so?" Polly exclaimed, her eyes sparkling.

"Oh! people who were interested in getting me to believe it. From the first I felt there was a common link of sympathy between us—that in both our families we were not understood, and that both our families had set themselves to hinder all our pleasures and amusements."

"Oh! yes," said Polly, eagerly. "But it couldn't have been Peter or Katey. I know Katey has turned against me lately, and Peter treats me like a child. But I don't so much blame him. But they shan't have their way, as I showed them to-night, locking me up like a little school-girl."

"It was an insult," said Mr. Molyneux, "to one of your position and your beauty. Yes, I say so—it is notorious! You are the most beautiful girl—and you know it—not in this wretched place, but in England. I have never seen any one to compare with you!"

"Oh, for shame!" said our poor foolish Polly, very piteously. "You are making fun of me, I know."

This was the only shape of the protest that she made; for she felt a new and peculiar thrill of pleasure at the warmth and energy of these compliments.

"Yes," he went on, "it is perfect oppression, and I admire your spirit—you, the jewel of your family, what they ought to be proud of, to be treated in such a way! Every one has been remarking it, and feeling for you."

"Have they?" asked Polly. "No?"

"Your father is so engrossed in his plots and schemes, he doesn't care for you or value you. He has got some low fellow—perhaps that Morrison—to marry you to; I know he has. You are to be used just to help on his interests. Why, the greatest lord in the land ought to be proud to get you."

"No, no," said Polly, smiling and pouting; "indeed, you know they wouldn't. But as for Peter and Katey, I have suspected something; but they won't find me such a child, I can tell them."

"How superb you are this night—this moment!" he said. "I tell you what, my dear child, this must not be allowed to go on. Come down here — this romantic garden," he added, drawing her with him; "every one about us here will be listening, and I have much to say to you. Look! can you put confidence in me? Do you trust me? for you will have to do it now."

A little scared, Polly looked at him; but she felt a sort of helpless and overpowered feeling coming over her.

"I mean," he added, hastily, "you do not hate me still—you assured me of that——"

"Oh! indeed I don't; you are my true friend, I believe."

"Well, listen: she has gone home"—he did not like to say Mrs. Molyneux—"you know who I mean."

Polly gave a little cry. "What, gone away and left me here?"

"Oh! yes; some of her meagrims and headaches. But listen to my plans for you. I am always thinking of you—I mean of your interests. This life of tyranny and oppression must not go on; you must not be sacrificed in this way—your precious health, precious self, hopes, and prospects. They are your enemies, or, what is the same thing, do not care for you. You don't know the plots that are hatching about you. You must trust your friends—it is your only chance."

Piteously entreating, really frightened, fluttered, agitated, a poor foolish little bird, Polly began to think herself an unhappy, persecuted heroine.

"What *am* I to do?" she exclaimed, passionately.

"Why, trust in me—in us, your true friends!" he said, hurriedly. You must leave these people, who do not care for you. You must be made happy, treated tenderly, by those who love you. You must give them up."

"What! Peter and Katey? And how can I do that? Ah! What does all this mean?"

"You are being sacrificed. Why, I know men in town, marquises and dukes, who if they once saw you, would give their lives to win you!"

"Oh! indeed," said Polly; "I would not care for that, unless it were one that I liked and really loved."

"There is one, then, that does! I will tell you of him now, if you like. Come, Polly, come with me, and let us leave this place at once. You shall live with us, *never* go back to them till they see you wealthy, titled, and magnificent—every one at your feet; and then they shall come imploring your pardon! Come at once!"

Bewildered, dazzled, feeling like a child—as she indeed was—to whom all indulgence must be extended, the unhappy Polly felt that she had lost the power of resistance. He was hurrying her along the gardens towards a gate that seemed to open on the road, when they were both suddenly confronted by Captain Montague.

"What!" said the latter, promptly, "going to win your wager?"

Captain Molyneux uttered something like an imprecation. "Get away out of this! Don't talk to me!"

But the presence of this third person roused Polly from the sort of dream in which, to do her all justice, she had been up to that moment.

"Wager?" she said, suddenly, shaking herself free. "What wager?"

"A wager that this gentleman made about you, Miss Findlater, at our mess-table."

"It's false!" said Captain Molyneux.

"It's true, and can be proved by a dozen who were present. But this is not the time to do it. I hear that Mrs. Molyneux has gone away; but there is a lady here who will take charge of you—your own sister!"

"Oh! I am miserable!" cried Polly, bursting into tears. "Where is she? Let me go to her. Oh! Captain Montague, take me to her."

"Certainly," said the other, gravely. "She is here close by, in the carriage."

Without another word he gave her his arm, turned round, and walked away. The other stood there completely baffled.

Nothing could exceed the tact of the former officer. "It was wrong of you, Miss Polly, to have gone to the ball with him; he is a low fellow, and not worthy to be a chaperon for you. It is hard that you should lose your evening, but your sister was a little uneasy about the suddenness of your expedition."

Here they were at the carriage door; he opened it, helped Polly in, shut it, talked a little at the door in his gayest way. It was surely what the Americans called "a very one-horse place;" so much so that he added, "I really think none of us will acknowledge that we have been there." The two sisters then drove away into the night.

CHAPTER XXXI. THE GRAND COUP.

While these events were taking place, matters still more dramatic were going on at Leadersfort. As the night began to set in the sick man grew more restless and impatient; while about the house the various parties lay in wait watching eagerly—themselves uncertain and undisturbed, and in the belief that this night would end all. Mrs. Leader had gone in for a moment to her husband, and found him much calmer. His face was shrunk, and there was a strange, wistful expression over it. "I want to see her," he said, wearily. "Let her come and pray for me; and for God's sake give over this wrangling! Send her here at once."

The other doctor was present, so she made no objection, but left the room at once and sought the Doctor.

"He wishes to see your daughter. Would you tell her to go up? But she should not tire him."

"Of course not. She is in her room."

Mrs. Leader sent up to her room; but,

as we know, Katey could not be found. She then sent to look for her over the house, when one of her servants said that Mrs. Cecil Leader had ordered out the brougham, and had gone away into Tilston. Into Tilston!—left the house! A gleam of light came into Mrs. Leader's eyes. She rang for a confidential messenger of her own, despatched him into Tilston to find out why the brougham had not returned, and then hurried up-stairs.

The Doctor very soon had learned this piece of news. "Katey left the place! What did the woman mean by such cracked behaviour? Where *was* she?" he asked, rushing about from library and drawing-room to the kitchen even. No one could tell him anything, save that she had taken the brougham and gone into Tilston. "What infernal idiotcy," asked the Doctor, "made her get such a thing into her head?" Certainly he was a poor persecuted fellow, to have to be carrying brains for every one of his family, who jointly or severally hadn't so much as an ounce of wit among them all. He was so worried and taken back by this unaccountable step, that though he felt it was dangerous to be absent at such a crisis, he could not resist setting off privately, and hurrying through the dark night into Tilston.

His own house he found completely deserted—the servant had gone to spend the evening with a friend; Polly's room seemed to be fastened from the inside, as he imagined, and after thundering and threatening for a long time, he could get no answer, and assumed it was that sulky child Polly in one of her fits; or else she was gone out to one of her friends. But Katey — where was Katey? He really felt a cold perspiration on his forehead, as he thought of the tricks that would be going on in his absence during these precious moments, each worth golden guineas! And then it was, as he turned from his own door, that the new reflection flashed upon him, that this very absence would be artfully and maliciously turned to their ruin! He was down at the hotel in a moment, and there learned from an ostler that the brougham had been seen to pass through, which was poor news indeed. "What on the face of earth was he to do?" If he was driven into hard lying and swearing for this, it must lie on that girl's conscience.

He posted back as hard as he could. Almost as he entered he met Mr. Randall Morrison entering, and just taking off his coat. "What did this mean?" thought the Doctor, turning pale again. Mr. Morrison spoke to him with a quiet carelessness; but there was a confident assurance in his eye. The Doctor saw that he was eager to get away up-stairs to his sister.

He waited below in that room. The house very silent, the night hovering on that debatable ground between night and morning; now for half an hour, now for three-quarters. But they did not come to him. Suddenly he heard a step, and Mary Leader entered. She was struck by his worn, shrunk face, wizened almost with anxiety.

"What is going on, for Heaven's sake, Miss Mary? How is he—what are they at?"

"Very quiet, very quiet. The doctor thinks a turn may be coming, and has gone to bed. Mr. Macfarlane is sitting up with him. Mrs. Leader is in her room; she is worn-out, she says. Oh! but Katey, Katey! Why was she not here? He is so hurt, so wounded, so shocked at her desertion of him!"

"Heaven knows what's over us all to-night! She was fagged to death, I suppose. No wonder she wanted a little sleep under her own roof, away from all this racket. But—but—*she* is gone to bed?" asked the Doctor, with a strange wistfulness. "You're sure of that?"

"I suppose so," said Mary, coldly.

"Then I am not," said the Doctor, seizing her wrist earnestly. "No, nothing of the kind. She's awake, and plotting at this moment. I have had my suspicions the whole of this night, suspicions which are as much a certainty as the light of that candle, from the moment that she came down and offered us all the kiss of peace. People of her sort don't change, any more than you can wash the spot off a bulldog's eye. As for Katey, my dear Miss Mary, there's a story about that which can't be explained now; but she'll tell you herself in the morning. But I warn you there's some game up between those two, about your poor sick father, for whom it is vital —vital that he be kept quiet."

The Doctor spoke with extraordinary vehemence and earnestness. Mary listened with interest.

"Yes," she said quietly; "something of the same sort of suspicion occurred to me to-night, when she volunteered that reconciliation. But Katey, if it could be explained—that would be the true cure—for he said to me, 'You see, as soon as she got what she wanted, she did not think me worth attending to.'"

The Doctor gasped. "Your step-mother had been in two minutes before that, I'll swear!"

"Yes, she had," said Mary.

"Yes, she had!" he answered, savagely, "and put the words into his mouth. I tell you there's scheming and plotting going on to-night, and, Miss Mary, if you'll be guided by me, and not leave your poor father to be bullied out of his warm bed into eternity, we'll plot, too, in a defensive way, at least."

"Anything to protect and save him," said she. "What you say seems probable enough."

"Whist!" said the Doctor, putting his hand up to his ear cautiously.

They were at the door of the parlour opening into the hall, near the foot of a great well staircase, that went up to the roof. A flash of a candle came down suddenly.

"I'll come back again, and shut the door quietly. I'll take my shoes off and creep up-stairs to Katey's room, where you'll find me. I'm going home now, you understand." And in a louder voice the Doctor said: "It's getting fine again, and I'll have a quiet walk home. Good night, Miss Mary. He'll be better in the morning, never fear."

Mary Leader disliked heartily any kind of organised deceit, but on this eventful night her habitual steadiness was quite overcome. Overpowered, too, by the Doctor's almost impassioned warmth, she could make no protest, and turned to go up-stairs. The light had disappeared. A sort of conviction came upon her that this theory of the Doctor's was quite true, with a sort of just anger at the poor helpless father she so loved being harassed out of the world.

At this moment Doctor Speed, candle in hand, appeared at the end of a corridor, coming to cross the hall, and making for his room. He was yawning and very tired. "He will do very well, Miss Leader, if he only gets sleep to-night. It was most unfortunate about Mrs. Cecil; it should have been kept from him. However, when I left him, he had fallen into a doze which, if it keeps on, may do him a world of good. Good night, or good morning rather." And again yawning, the doctor, speculating how he must "be off" in the morning, and who would be up to hand him his hundred and fifty guineas, passed away down another corridor, and was lost to view.

"Yes," thought Mary, "Doctor Findlater was right." And she went to her own room, creeping along ever so softly.

After about a quarter of an hour, the Doctor tapped at the door, and stood there when she opened it, his shoes in his hands. He had come up the back stairs. "Come, Miss Mary," he said, "let us get down to Cecil's, one by one. I declare I am ashamed of myself for all this Guy Fawkes work; but what can one do in such a fix? I declare it's enough to agitate a man's nerves; and no one will make a handsomer almond than I will, if the datas prove fallacious."

They went along to Cecil's room, which was on the same floor as Mr. Leader's, only at the right wing of the house. A great balcony or verandah ran round the house, and this was in the Doctor's mind when he mentioned Cecil's room. Rich thick pile carpets ran round this corridor—a piece of Mrs. Leader's extravagance, but which favoured her enemy's movements in the most fortunate way. As the Doctor drew near the sick man's room, a strange cry seemed to pierce the door, with eager voices in low suppressed tones. The Doctor again caught Mary Leader by the wrist, made her listen a moment, then hurried away to Katey's room, softly closing the door. "They're at it," he said, in a whisper—"God forgive their night's work! Put this shawl round your head and shoulders, for the night's cold, and follow me."

He opened the French windows, and stepped out on the balcony. The noble park and stately trees lay sleeping beneath, and a great glare of light was shed out on the grass from the painted windows. The Doctor well knew that one of Mr. Leader's fancies was to have the shutters open, and plenty of light admitted. They crept along the balcony, and were at the window. The Doctor looked in first; they could hear the voices plainly. Then he drew Mary forward. There was no chance of their being seen. It was long before the two forgot the spectacle. The unhappy man, worn to a shadow, sitting up, Mrs. Leader supporting him, and talking slowly, her brother beside her, Macfarlane at the foot of the bed. They heard her quite plain.

"They are only trying to frighten you; you will get quite well, the doctor says so. It is part of this conspiracy to tell you the contrary. But tell him, Randall, about *her*—that woman for whom you did so much. Where do you think she went to-night? To a ball! Yes, to a ball. Randall tracked her—he has the name and address. That was what she gave you up for."

"Oh! how unkind of her, how cruel! You see there is no one I can trust—not

one! She left me here, not knowing but I might be dead when she came back."

"What did *she* care? She had got you to do what she wanted—she had made it all safe."

"How cruel!—how base!" he groaned. "But I don't believe it still—there is some mistake. She will come back and explain it. And so you roused me up to tell me this, and make me miserable? Go away, I tell you!"

"Yes, in one moment, dear. But won't you punish her? You wouldn't like to have her and her low father going about boasting of what they can make you do, no matter how they behave?"

"Well, in the morning, if you will all let me be alive, among you, we will talk of it then. Go away, for God's sake!"

Mrs. Leader looked at her brother.

"To tell you the truth," said the latter, slowly, "this is a thing that you ought not to put off in this fashion, and that we cannot let you put off in this way. Doctor Speed has spoken to you as plainly as he could." (Here Doctor Findlater saw Mrs. Leader turn away, and place the curtain between her face and her husband's!) "He has told you that the diseases under which you suffer are very serious, dangerous, and even fatal. It is a duty to tell you this plainly, and that it is no time for putting off serious matters."

"I don't believe all that," said the unhappy victim; "you do it to frighten me."

"Ask any of the doctors, there are three in the house. It is childish, and this cannot and must not be put off. See here, my dear Mr. Leader: I must tell you plainly you have committed a gross injustice to your wife, in letting yourself be pillaged by adventurers like these Findlaters. You have done a scandalous wrong, that the world will cry out against, and you must repair it now!"

"In the morning!—in the morning!" pleaded the unhappy man. "I am so weak—you are killing me! Don't—don't, I beg; it is not my act—I am not free!"

The two faces were looking in on the guilty party from the window. It was a horrid and ghastly picture: Mrs. Leader hiding away behind the curtain; the shrunk, worn, dying figure, propped up in the middle; Doctor Macfarlane holding the paper, while Randall guided the pen. The wild terror in that sick man's eyes seemed like madness. He fell back on his pillow, while the other two, at a side-table, hastily wrote their names as witnesses.

Such was the scene that night at Leadersfort. Mary Leader several times had been about to beat impatiently on the window, but the Doctor held her back.

At six o'clock Doctor Speed was roused up to come to the bedside in all haste. The patient was sinking. The boat which had made such a weary and stormy passage was almost touching the bank. Mary Leader, excited, came rushing to meet him. The doctor saw at once how it was. Gradually the fatal word passed round, and they came gliding in to assist at the last awful spectacle. The eyes of the former barrister wandered round restlessly, and at last settled on one who had entered the latest. It was Katey. A smile of welcome appeared on his lips, and he attempted to stretch out his hand. Suddenly a look of terror came into his face. He tried to lift himself. "You will hate me," he murmured; "I did not mean it. I was weak and helpless, and you were not there. Why *weren't* you here?"

Katey, on her knees beside him, could only plead that she was obliged to go.

"Don't fatigue him," said Mrs. Leader, drawing nearer. The shrunk and shrivelled hands grasped at her, and Mary, stepping softly forward, placed Katey's in his. Already was the strange grey tone spreading over his face, the shadow perhaps of the transparent wing of the Destroyer. In a few minutes kind but firm hands were leading the weeping women from the room; and the poor barrister, whose wealth and estate had brought him only weariness and misery, was at last at rest.

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THE ROSE AND THE KEY.

CHAPTER IV. HOW THEY ALL GOT ON.

JUST for a moment the appearance of this Cocles, domesticated under the same roof, spy, thief, whatever he might be, made the young lady wince. Her impulse was to walk straight into the kitchen, cross-examine the visitor, and call on Richard Pritchard to turn him out forthwith. But that was only for one moment; the next, she was chatting just as usual. Mrs. Pritchard, with her pretty Welsh accent, another candle, and her smile of welcome, had run out to accompany the ladies up-stairs to know their wishes, and to make any little adjustments in the room they might require.

"I lighted a bit o' fire, please 'm, the evenin' was gone rather cold, I thought."

"You did quite right, Mrs. Pritchard; you take such good care of us; it looks so comfortable," said the old lady.

"I'm very glad 'm, thank you, ma'am, will you please to have tea 'm?"

"Yes, as quickly as possible, thanks."

And Mrs. Pritchard vanished noiselessly. The old lady's guest was delighted with everything he saw.

It is not a large room; square, with blackest oak panels, burnished so that they actually flash in the flicker of the fire, that burns under the capacious arch of the fireplace. All the furniture, chairs, tables, and joint stools, are of the same black oak, waxed and polished, till it gleams and sparkles again. These clumsy pieces of ancient cabinet-making have probably descended, with this wing of the old house, to its present occupiers. The floor is also of polished oak, with a piece of thick old carpet laid down in the middle, and the window is covered with a rude curtain of baize. There are two sets of shelves against the wall, on which stand thick the brightly coloured delft figures, cups, and candlesticks, interspersed with mutilated specimens of old china—a kind of ornament in which the Welsh delight, and which makes their rooms very bright and cheerful. The room is a picture of neatness. For a king's ransom you could not find dust enough in it to cover a silver penny. The young guest looks round delighted. Margaret's homely room did not seem to Faust more interesting, or more instinct with the spirit of neatness.

"Well, now your are in our farm-house, Mr.——." The old lady had got thus far, when she found herself at fault, a little awkwardly.

"My name is Marston," he said, smiling a little, but very pleasantly.

"And I think, for my part, I have seen much more uncomfortable drawing-rooms," she resumed. "I think it is a place one might grow fond of. Marston," she murmured in a reverie, and then she said to him, "I once met a Mr. Marston at——"

But here a covert glance from Maud pulled her up again.

"I certainly did meet a Mr. Marston somewhere; but it is a long time ago," she said.

"We are to be found in three different counties," he said, laughing; "it is hard to say where we are at home."

"Aren't you afraid of those great wet boots?" the officious old lady began.

"Oh, dear! not the least," said he, "if you don't object to them in your drawing-room." He glanced at the young lady, so as to include her. "But the little walk up here has shaken off all the wet, and as for myself, they are a sort of diving-bells in which

one can go anywhere and be as dry as on terra firma; it is the only use of them." He turned to the young lady. "Very tempting scenery about here. I dare say you have taken a long walk to-day. Some lady friends of mine, last year, over did it very much, and were quite knocked up for some time after they left this."

"I'm a very good walker—better than my cousin," said the young lady; "and a good long walk is one of the most delightful things on earth. To see, as I have done, often, distant blue hills grow near, and reveal all their picturesque details, and a new landscape open before you, and finally to see the same hills fall into the rear, and grow as dim and blue as they were before, and to owe the transformation to your own feet, is there anything that gives one such a sense of independence? Those fine ladies who go everywhere in their carriages enjoy nothing of this, and yet, I think, it is half the pleasure of beautiful scenery. My cousin Max to-day was lecturing me on the duty of being content—I don't think that is the speech of a discontented person."

"It is a very wise speech, and perfectly true; I have experienced the same thing a thousand times myself," said Mr. Marston.

Miss Max would have had a word to say, but she was busy hammering upon the floor with a cudgel provided for the purpose of signalling thus for attendance from below.

Mrs. Pritchard enters with the tea. Is there a cosier spectacle? If people are disposed to be happy, is there not an influence in the cups and saucers, and all the rest, that makes them cheery, and garrulous, and prone to intimacy?

It is an odd little adventure. Outside—

> The speedy gleams the darkness swallows,
> Loud, long, and deep the thunder bellows.

The pretty girl has drawn the curtain halfway back, and opened a lattice in the stone-shafted window, the air being motionless, to see the lightning better. The rain is still rushing down perpendicularly, and whacking the pavement below all over. Inside, the candles glimmer on oaken walls three hundred years old, and a little party of three, so oddly made acquainted, are sitting over their homely tea, and talking as if they had known one another as long as they could remember.

Handsome Mr. Marston is chatting in the happiest excitement he has ever known. The girl can't deny, in foro conscientiæ, that his brown features and large dark eyes, and thick soft hair, and a certain delicacy of outline almost feminine, accompanied with his manly and athletic figure, present an ensemble singularly handsome.

"His face is intelligent, there is fire in his face, he looks like a hero," she admitted to herself. "But what do I know of him? He talks good-naturedly. His manners are gentle; but mamma says that young faces are all deceptive, and that character does not write itself there, or tone the voice, or impress the manner, until beauty begins to wear itself out. I know nothing about him. He seems to know some great people, but he won't talk of them to *us*. That is good-breeding, but nothing more. He seems to enjoy himself here in this homely place, and drinks his tea very happily from these odd delft cups. He brings the kettle, or hammers on the floor with that cudgel, as my cousin orders him. But what is it all? A masquerading adventure—the interest or fun of which consists in its incongruity with the spirit of his life, and its shock to his tastes. He may be cruel, selfish, disobliging, insolent, luxurious."

In this alternative she wronged him. This Charles Marston, whose letters came to him addressed the "Honourable Charles Marston," was, despite his cleverness, something of a dreamer, very much of an enthusiast, and as capable of immensurable folly, in an affair of the grand passion, as any schoolboy, in the holidays, with his first novel under his pillow.

"He can't suppose, seeing us here," thought the girl, "that we are people such as he is accustomed to meet. Of course he despises us. Very good, sir. An eye for an eye," and she turned her splendid dark eye for a moment covertly upon him, "and a tooth for a tooth. If you despise us, I despise you. We shall see. I shall be very direct. I shall bring that to the test, just now. We shall see."

Charles Marston stole beside her, and looked out, with her, at the lightning. This is an occupation that helps to make young people acquainted. A pity it does not oftener occur in our climate. The little interjections. The "oh, oh, ohs!" and "listens," the "hushes," and "wasn't that glorious!" "you're not afraid?" and fifty little useless but rather tender attentions, arise naturally from the situation. Thus an acquaintance, founded in thunder and lightning, may, like that of Macbeth and the witches, endure to the end of the gentleman's days.

Not much attended to, I admit, good Miss Max talked on, about fifty things, and, now and then, threw in an interjection, when an unusually loud peal shook the walls of the old farm-house, and was followed for a minute by a heavier cataract of rain.

But soon, to the secret grief of Mr. Marston, the thunder began perceptibly to grow more distant, and the lightning less vivid, and, still more terrible, the rain to abate.

The interest in the storm subsided, and Miss Maud Guendoline closed the lattice, and returned to the tea-table.

Had he ever seen in living face, in picture, in dream, anything so lovely? Such silken brown hair, such large eyes and long lashes, and beautifully red lips! Her dimples look so pretty in the oblique light and shadow, as her animated talk makes a pleasant music in his ears. He is growing more foolish than he suspects.

Miss Max, who knows nothing of him, who can't tell whether he is a nobleman or a strolling player, whether he is worth ten thousand a year, or only the clothes on his back and his enormous pair of boots, marks the symptoms of his weakness, and approves and assists with all the wise decision of a romantic old woman.

She makes an excuse of cold feet to turn about and place hers upon the fender. It is a lie, palpably, and Miss Maud is angry, and insists on talking to her, and keeping the retiring chaperon, much against her will, still in evidence.

The young man is not the least suspicious, has not an idea that good Miss Max is wittingly befriending him, but earnestly wishes that she may fall into a deep sleep over the fire.

The cruel girl, however, insists on her talking.

"I saw you talking to those American people who came into the carriage at Chester, didn't you?" said the girl.

"Yes, dear," said Miss Max, dryly; "nothing could be more uninteresting."

"I was in the waiting-room at Chester with that very party, I'm certain. There were two ladies, weren't there, and the man had a kind of varnished waterproof coat, and a white hat, and was very thin, and had a particularly long nose, a little crooked?"

"Yes, that is *my* friend," answered Maud. "That gentleman was good enough to take a great interest in me and my cousin. I had to inform him that my christian name is Maud and my surname Guendoline; that a friend had made me a present of my first-class ticket; that my papa has been dead for many years; and that mamma's business allows her hardly an hour to look after me; that I have not a shilling I can call my own; that I thought I could do something to earn a subsistence for myself; that I can draw a little—I can teach——"

"Where have you ever taught, dear?" threw in Miss Max, apparently in great vexation at her companion's unseasonable frankness.

"I don t say I have yet taught for money, but I have learned something of it at the Sunday school, and I don't see why I shouldn't do it as well as mamma. Then there's my music—that ought to be worth something."

"You must be tired, I think," interrupted the old lady, a little sharply; "you have had a very long walk to-day. I think you had better get to your room."

"I have stayed, I'm afraid, a great deal too late," said Mr. Marston, who could not mistake the purport of the old lady's speech. "I'm afraid you are tired, Miss Guendoline. I'm afraid you have both been doing too much, and you'll allow me, won't you, just to call in the morning to inquire how you are?"

"It is very inhospitable," said Miss Max, relenting a little; "but we are very early people in this part of the world, and I shall be very happy to see you to-morrow, if we should happen to be at home."

He had taken his leave; he was gone. A beautiful moonlight was silvering the quaint old building and the graceful trees surrounding it. The mists of night hung on the landscape, and the stars, the fabled arbiters of men's fortunes, burned brilliantly in the clear sky.

He crossed the stile, he walked along the white path, as if in a trance. He paused under a great ash-tree, snake-bound in twisted ivy, and leaned against its trunk, looking towards the thatched gable of the old stone building.

"Was there ever so beautiful a creature?" he said. "What dignity, what refinement, what prettiness, and what a sweet voice; what animation! Governess, farmer's daughter, artist, be she what she may, she is the loveliest being that ever trod this earth!"

In this rapture—in which mingled that pain of doubt and yearning of separation which constitutes the anguish of such violent "fancies"—he walked slowly to

the stepping-stones, and conning over every word she had spoken, and every look in her changing features, he arrived at last, rather late, at his inn, the Verney Arms, in Cardyllion.

CHAPTER V. A SPECTRE.

THE two ladies sat silent for some time after their guest had departed.

Miss Max spoke first.

"I don't think it is quite honest—you make me ashamed of you."

"I'm ashamed of myself. It's true; he'll think too well of me," said the girl, impetuously.

"He thinks very oddly of us both, I'm afraid," said Miss Max.

"I'm not afraid—I don't care—I dare say he does. I think you hinted that he should carry you across the stream on his back. I got out of hearing before you had done. You all but asked him for his name, and finally turned him out in the thunder at a moment's notice."

"It does not matter what an old woman says or does, but a girl is quite different," replied Miss Max. "You need not have said one word about our ways and means."

"I shall say the same to every one that cares to hear where I am not under constraint; and you shall keep your promise. Do let me enjoy my liberty while I may," answered the girl.

"Are you a gipsy? You are such a mixture of audacity and imposture!" said Miss Max.

"Gipsy? Yes. We are something like gipsies, you and I—our long marches and wandering lives. Imposture and audacity? I should not mind pleading guilty to that, although, when I think it over, I don't remember that I said a word that was not literally true, except my surname. I was not bound to tell that, and he would have been, I dare say, no wiser if I had. I was not bound to tell him anything. I think I have been very good."

"I dare say he is Lord Somebody," said Miss Max.

"Do you like him the better for that?" asked the girl.

"You are such a radical, Maud! Well, I don't say I do. But it just guarantees that if the man has any nice tastes, he has leisure and money to cultivate them; and if he has kind feelings he can indulge them, and is liberated from all those miserable limitations that accompany poverty."

"I have made a very frank confession with one reserve. On that point I have a right to be secret, and you have promised secrecy. Am I under the miserable obligation to tell my real condition to every one who pleases to be curious?"

"You blush, Maud."

"I dare say I do. It is because you look at me so steadily. I told him all I choose to tell. He shan't think me an adventuress; no one shall. I said enough to show I was, at least, willing to earn an honest livelihood. I said the same to that vulgar American, and you did not object. And why not to him? I don't care one farthing about him in particular. He will not pay us a visit to-morrow, you'll find. He has dropped us, being such as I suppose him, and we shall never see him more. I am glad of it. Let us cease to think of him. There's a more interesting man downstairs."

In her slender hand she took the stick that she called the cudgel, and hammered on the floor.

Up came pretty Anne Pritchard, looking sleepy, her cheeks a little pale, her large eyes a little drowsy.

"Can I see your father, Mr. Pritchard?" asked Maud.

"He's gone to his bed, please, ma'am, an hour ago."

"Is he asleep, can you tell?"

"He goes to sleep at once, if you please, miss."

"How provoking! What shall we do?" She turned to Miss Max, and then to the girl. She said: "I saw a man, a stranger—a man with a blind eye, here, when we came in. Is he here still?"

"Yes 'm, please."

"He has a bed here, has he, and stays to-night?" asked the young lady.

"Yes 'm, please," said the girl, with a curtsy.

"What do you think? Shall we turn him out?" said Maud, turning to Miss Max.

"Oh! no, dear, don't trouble your head about him. He'll go in the morning. He's not in our way, at all," answered Miss Max.

"Well, I suppose it is not worth making a fuss about. There is another advantage of the visit of our friend in the boots this evening. I could not find an opportunity to tell Mr. Pritchard to turn that person out of the house," said Miss Maud, with vexation.

"Please 'm, Mr. Lizard."

"Say it again, child, Mr. Who?" asked Miss Max.

"Mr. Lizard, please 'm. Elihu Lizard is wrote in his Bible, and he expounded this evening before he went to his bed. He's a very good man."

"Was he ever here before?" asked Miss Maud.

"No, please 'm."

"And what is he?" demanded the young lady.

"I don't know. Oh, yes, please 'm, I forgot; he said he was gettin' money, please 'm, for the good of the Gospel, and he had papers and cards, 'm."

"The same story, you see," she said, turning with a little nod, and a faint smile, to her companion.

"Do let the man rest in his bed, my dear, and let us go to ours; you forget how late it is growing," said Miss Max, and yawned, and lighted her candle.

"That will do, thanks," said Maud, thoughtfully, "and will you tell Mr. Pritchard, your father, in the morning, that we wish very much to see him before we go out?"

"And let us have breakfast a little before nine, please," added Miss Max, looking at her watch, and holding it to her ear. "Come, darling," she said, finding it was going, "it really is very late, and you have a good deal, you know, to do to-morrow."

"It is the most unpleasant thing in the world," said the pretty young lady, looking thoughtfully at her companion. "There can be no question he is following us, or one of us, you or me. Who on earth can have sent him? Who can it be? That odious creature! Did you ever see a more villanous face? He is watching us, picking up information about all our doings. What can he want? It is certainly for no good. Who can it be?"

"We can't find out to-night, darling, and there is no good in losing your sleep. Perhaps we may make out something from old Pritchard in the morning," said Miss Max.

"Yes, yes, perhaps so. All I know is, it is making me quite miserable," said the girl, and she kissed the old lady, and went to her room. And Miss Max, having seen that the fire was nearly out, retired also to hers.

As neat and as quaint as their drawing-room, was Miss Max's bedroom. But though everything invited to rest, and Miss Max rather stiff from her long walk, and a little drowsy and yawning, she was one of those fidgety old ladies who take a prodigious time to get into bed.

Nearly an hour had passed, during which she had stuck armies of pins in her pin-cushion, and shut and opened every drawer in her room, and walked from one table to another oftener, and made more small dispositions about her room and her bed, than I could possibly reckon, and, being now arrayed in slippers and dressing-gown, she bethought of something to be adjusted in the sitting-room, which might just as well have waited till the morning, and so she took her candle and descended the old oak stairs.

On the solid plank of that flooring, the slippered footfall of the thin old lady made no sound. The moon was high, and her cold blue light fell slanting through the window upon the floor of the little lobby. Within and without reigned utter silence; and if Miss Max had been a ghost-seeing old lady, no scene could have been better suited for the visitation of a phantom than this dissociated wing of a house more than three hundred years old.

Miss Max was now at the drawing-room door, which she opened softly and stepped in. It was neither without a tenant nor a light.

At the far corner of the table, with a candle in his hand, which he instantly blew out, she saw the slim figure and sly lean face of Elihu Lizard, his white eye-ball turned towards her, and his other eye squinting with the scowl of alarm, fiercely across his nose, at her.

Mr. Lizard was, with the exception of his shoes and his coat, in full costume. His stockings and his shirt-sleeves gave him a burglarious air, which rather heightened the shock of his ugly leer, thus unexpectedly encountered.

He stepped back into a recess beside the chimney almost as she entered.

For a moment she was not quite sure whether her frequent discussions with Maud respecting this repulsive person had not excited her fears and fancies, so as to call up an ugly vision. Mr. Lizard, however, seeing that the extinction of his candle-light was without effect, Miss Max's candle shining full upon him, stepped forward softly, and executed his guileless smile and lowly reverence.

Miss Max had recovered her intrepidity; and she said sharply:

"What do you mean, sir? what on earth brings you to our private sitting-room?"

"I have took the liberty," he said, in his quavering tones, inclining his long face aside with a plaintive simper, nearly

closing his eyelids, and lifting one skinny hand—it was the tone and attitude in which the good Elihu Lizard was wont to expound, the same in which he might stand over a cradle, and pronounce a blessing on the little Christian in blankets, with whose purity the guileless heart of the good man sympathised—"being a-thirst and panting, so to speak, as the hart for the water-brooks, as I lay in my bed, I arose, and finding none where I looked for it, I thought it would not be grudged me even in the chambers of them that go delicately, and therefore am I found here seeking if peradventure I might find any."

Elihu Lizard, upon all occasions on which worldly men, of his rank in life, would affect the language of ceremony, glided from habit into that with which he had harangued from tables and other elevations at Greenwich Fair and similar assemblies, before he had engaged in his present peculiar occupation.

There was something celestial in the suavity of this person that positively exasperated Miss Max.

"That's all very fine. Water, indeed! There you were, over Miss Maud's and my letters and papers, in our private sitting-room, and you show, sir, that you well knew you were about something nefarious, for I saw you put out your candle—there it is, sir, in your hand. How disgusting! How dare you! And I suspect you, sir, and your impious cant; and I'll find out all about you, or I'll lose my life! How can Mr. Pritchard allow such persons into his house? I'll see him in the morning. I'll speak to the police in Cardyllion about you. I'll come to the bottom of all this. I'll consult a lawyer. I'll teach you, sir, be you who you may, you are not to follow people from place to place, and to haunt their drawing-rooms at dead of night. I'll turn the tables upon you; I'll have you pursued."

The good man turned up his effective eye, till nothing but its white was seen, and it would have been as hard to say which of the two had a pupil to it, as under which of his thimbles, if thimble-rigger he be, the pea actually lies. He smiled patiently, and bowed lowly, and with his palm raised, uttered the words, "Charity thinketh no evil."

The measure of Miss Max's indignation was full. With her brown silk handkerchief swathed tightly about her head, and looking somewhat like a fez, in her red cloth slippers, and white flannel dressing-gown, that, I must allow, was rather "skimpy," showing a little more of her ankle than was quite dignified, she was a rather striking effigy of indignation. She felt that she could have hurled her candlestick at the saintly man's head, an experiment which it is as well she did not hazard, seeing that she and her adversary would have been reduced to instantaneous darkness, and might have, without intending it, encountered in the dark, while endeavouring to make their retreat. Instead, therefore, of proceeding to this extreme measure, with kindling eyes, and a stamp on the floor, she said:

"Leave this room, this moment, sir! How dare you? I shall call up Mr. Pritchard, if you presume to remain here another moment."

I dare say that Mr. Lizard had completed whatever observations he intended to make, and his reconnaisance accomplished, he did not care to remain a moment longer than was necessary under fire. He withdrew with the smiling meekness of a Christian enduring pagan vituperation and violence.

In the morning, when, at their early breakfast, the ladies made inquiry after him, they learned that he had taken his departure more than an hour before.

"More evidence, if it were needed, of a purpose, in tracking us as he does, which won't bear the light!" exclaimed Miss Max, who was now at least as strong upon the point as the handsome girl who accompanied her. "I don't understand it. It is some object connected with *you*, most positively. Who on earth can be his employer? I confess, Maud, I'm frightened, at last."

"Do you think it can be old Mr. Tintern?" asked the girl, after a silence, looking curiously in the face of her companion. "That old man may well wish me dead."

"It may interest possibly a good many people to watch you very closely," said the elder lady.

They both became thoughtful.

"You will now believe," said the young lady, with a sigh, "that the conditions of my life are not quite usual. I tell you, cousin, I have a presentiment that some misfortune impends. I suppose there is a crisis in every one's life; the astrologers used to say so. God send me safely through mine!"

"Amen, darling, if there be a crisis," said Miss Max, more gravely than she usually spoke. "But we must not croak

any more. I have great confidence, under God, in energy, my dear, and you were always a spirited girl. What, after all, can befal you?"

"Many things. But let us think of to-day and Cardyllion and Llanberris, and let to-morrow take care of itself. What a beautiful day!"

ONLY ON THE BOX.

"Any one got a light?

"Here, my boy, I have. The best matches in the world. Safest thing you can——"

"What, those things! Won't let them near me! I'd have the patentees burnt with fagots of 'em. Why I paid for a box of them, and Jessie paid, too, how much do you suppose? Out of a shop, mind you!"

"I can't tell, I'm sure; some fancy price."

"Only fifty thousand pounds. I'll tell you how. Wait, I can't give up my smoke, even to gratify so just a vendetta. So for once I'll use the ill-omened thing. I remember the last time I used, or *tried* to use them—but you shall hear."

You remember at the time when I and Jessie were going on together, old Foxberry, the millionaire; so he enjoyed the credit of being called, though without any claim to the title, as it proved, for he had but seventy thousand pounds, and a millionaire, even by courtesy, ought to show at least two or three hundred thousand. However, he took all the airs, and enjoyed all the respect, of one, and so as far as he was concerned it came to the same thing. He really showed a great interest in our cooing and wooing; quite beyond what might be expected from a money-grubber, such as he had been all his life. The liking began on his side, through my presenting him with a pound of the very choicest Turkish, which had been sent me as a present. There was his weak place. He smoked—smoked day and night, not like a chimney which often has its fires banked up, but like a mountain on fire.

"Give me my pipe," he would say, taking a rather selfish view of the cosmogony, "and I don't care if the world turns upside-down."

A rather weak logician once retorted on him: "But, my dear Mr. Foxberry, if the world turns upside-down, you and your pipe must turn upside-down with it."

But Mr. Foxberry had him in a moment.

"I say, sir," he roared, "if you had taken the trouble to attend—I stipulate for the quiet enjoyment of my pipe. You like splitting hairs, sir, I see."

I could see that this old gentleman took a kindly interest in my love for Jessie. Between huge clouds of smoke he grunted out his approbation.

"I like you," he said, "Bob, and that's a great deal. Not so well as my pipe, of course; but more than my money. I like you better than the greedy crew who are hunting me for it, and who will find themselves disappointed."

Every one, of course, good-naturedly said that *I* was hunting him, which was far from the truth, though I own I had the air of it, and liked listening to his stories, his grim remarks, and, I own, the smoking some rare old cigars that he had got from a sea captain. I visited him often when it suited me, took little trouble about him, and at last got a hint from a friendly solicitor's clerk that my name figured in "large caps," and in large figures, too, in his testament. The next time old Foxberry was smoking hard, he said to me:

"Why don't you name a day? Be bold, man alive. Pluck up and don't stand shilly-shallying. You won't lose by it in the end," he said, significantly. "I tell you what," he said, "I've got a new box of cigars over. We'll make a little party for a drive to Three-cross Abbey. Get her to meet you there. Settle it all off hand, try the new cigars, and have done with it."

I was enchanted. This, indeed, looked like business. I wrote off a hasty note to Jessie and her aunt, telling them how much depended on their coming, and imploring them to attend. I wrote also to a jeweller for a couple of little lockets, as I wanted to make a tender offering. I was very happy and excited. Mr. Foxberry grew more and more benignant.

"There are pipes," he said, "that I knock about any way, and throw down after I have smoked them. There are others I take care of, and put by carefully. You are a good fellow, Bob. Will be a capital smoker one of these days, and I'll take care of you."

I thanked him cordially.

Well, the morning came, and the carriage was actually at the door. Just then the post came in with two letters and a little registered card-board box. One was

from Jessie, saying that she was delighted to come. The other was from the jeweller, saying that he sent me two lockets, but that he wanted one back at once "for a bride-maid's order." The lockets were very pretty, and I admired them greatly. It was hard to choose between them. I was in difficulty when Mr. Foxberry decided me by roaring out from below that he was ready, that the cigars were in, and that we were losing the fine day. I had thus to make a hasty choice. So I chose one that seemed the most elegant, rolled it up in silver-paper, and packed it up in a neat card-board box. But how was I to send back the other locket? A capital idea! There was a match-box on the chimney-piece, which I emptied, packed away the locket in it, and sealed the box in white note-paper, tying it round with tape.

"You," I said to a handful of the matches, "must not set the house on fire, and will be of use in my waiscoat-pocket." And there I deposited them.

My revered friend, a little out of humour, was still calling for me. I came down with many apologies, and away we drove. Before we had got a quarter of a mile, he called out:

"Hallo! just like me! Forgotten my fusee-box. Drive back at once."

"Stop, sir," I said, smiling, "I have thought of that;" and pulled out a match from my pocket. He would have hugged me for this forethought. He said it showed such a true smoking instinct. It certainly did.

"Just fancy," he said, holding up his cigar; "I should have let this out, and where should I have been then? We don't pass a village or even a cottage on the road to Three-cross Abbey; and there's not a house within miles of it. Or else," he added reflectively, "I must have gone on smoking the whole day and the whole of dinner. I tell you solemnly, I think I should die if I lost my after-dinner smoke."

I was a little facetious on this, making imaginary plans as to how the sacred fire might have been kept in, or propagated; making the coachman keep it alive during dinner, and the man-servant during the coachman's dinner, and I relieving both.

"But only think of the risk," he said: "suppose the cigar got choked, or the fellow got drunk, and let it go out. What would become of me then? I declare," he said, with ferocity, "I'd have the fellow broke and dismissed. I'd work heaven and earth to punish him."

"Quite right," I said, laughing. "But I am happy to save the poor devil from such a fate."

"You would not," he said, sternly. "Where my pipe is concerned, I'd let nothing stand in the way. I really believe it to be the elixir of life; and any one that interferes with that supply of vital energy I look on as interfering with my life. And I would deal with him accordingly."

The cigars were certainly very good, and, after smoking two, he said, "Now, my boy, for a bit of self-denial. Not one more till after lunch, or dinner, as we may call it; and then how we shall relish it! That's the real time for enjoyment."

We were now at Three-cross Abbey, a little old ruin, in the middle of a sort of waste or common, with hardly a tree or a house near. It was a favourite spot for a picnic, as the ruin was picturesque, and moss-grown, and shady, sheltering us all from the sun. Jessie and her aunt were there waiting to meet us, Jessie looking lovely, as, indeed, old Foxberry as good as told her during lunch.

"When you're both installed in a fine house, she'll look all the better for such a frame. Some one," he added, with meaning, "will take care of you both."

Dinner was over, and he called to his man to bring him his cigar-case out of the carriage.

"I never was in a better humour for a cigar, and for a good cigar," he said. "After that little repast, too, I shall enjoy it the more. Here is a good corpulent one for you, and another for me. I always say, give me my smoke and the world may turn upside-down. Ay, and every human being in it, too," he added.

We laughed at the jest. Such a little tribute was only due to him after the generous declaration about us.

"Give me a light," he said, sticking the cigar into a hole in the extreme corner of his mouth, a position which fanatical smokers are fond of.

I drew out my bundle of matches with triumph. "I have half a boxful in my pocket," I said. "It never does to be without them." And I rubbed one on my boot-heel. It missed fire. I tried another. It missed also. I tried a third. It missed again.

"What are you about?" he said, testily. "You're very awkward; I thought any fool could strike a match——"

"My boot is damp," I said, nervously. "I'll try the wall here." I did so, and failed with three more in succession.

He now lost all patience. "You are a

more stupid fellow than I took you for. Here, give 'em to me." He tried himself, but in vain: they all failed one after the other. I felt my heart sinking.

"The damp must have got at them," I faltered, trying again.

"I hate delays," he said in a passion, "it spoils my smoke. Are you a noodle?"

"Why," cried Jessie, who had been looking at one of them closely, "they are safety matches! They light only upon the box."

Old Foxberry flung his cigar over the wall in a fury. He gave me one look and walked away to the carriage. I rushed in despair to the coachman and the footman.

"For Heaven's sake, a match! Twenty pounds for one," I whispered hoarsely.

"Lord bless the man!" said the former, starting, "what d'ye mean?"

"A match, a match! Quick, a common lucifer match!"

"I ought to have one," he said, feeling his waistcoat pocket. "Wait—no—yes—there is one I do believe."

He pulled out one—saved! It was as precious as a gem, that little splinter of wood. Alas! with fraying in his pocket the top had all worn off. It was no good struggling with fate. I bowed my head and submitted. All the way back he never opened his lips. When he got out he complained of being ill, and said to his housekeeper, "That blackguard had done it purposely, in hopes of killing me; but I'll be even with him." The next day he altered his will.

"Now," added Bob, "admit that I have reason to loathe the sight of safety matches that light only on the box."

A BIG "BOX O' WHUSTLES."

The old Scotch lady who, accustomed in her Presbyterian place of worship to psalmody without organ accompaniment, made use of the disparaging allusion to a "box o' whustles," would have been astonished beyond measure if she could have known of the box of whistles which is being prepared for the new Albert Hall of Science and Art. Where the pipes are reckoned by thousands, the whistling will, indeed, be loud and varied, up to very much altissimo, and down to very, very double bass. In the street organs which vex our nerves so severely, though the playing is by a rotating handle instead of by a row of finger-keys, the sounds of the pipes are the same in principle, however coarse in quality. Wind is forced into the pipes by pressure, and escapes by orifices which have vibrating reeds or tongues adjusted to them; and according to the nicety of this adjustment, so does the exit-current produce an audible sound, always intended to be musical, but sometimes very much the reverse. This reads simple enough, but in practice it is a very complicated affair indeed. The street organ, which Pietro Giacomo Malatesta grinds before our doors as a means of grinding his bread, has sometimes strings, sometimes vibrating springs, to yield the sounds, but in most cases it has pipes. He turns a handle, which handle turns a barrel in the body of the instrument. The barrel is studded with copper or brass pins, apparently indiscriminately placed, but really arranged in definite order according to the tune to be played. Numerous wooden levers or keys catch against the pins as the barrel rotates, and are so acted upon as to open certain pipes ranged in order. The handle at the same time works a pair of bellows, by which wind is forcibly driven into the pipes thus opened. And so the pins, varying their action according to the mode in which they stud the barrel, open in turn all the pipes that are necessary to the production of a tune. The instruments are rather costly, for there is really a large amount of mechanism in them. Some organs, instead of being played by means of a rotating handle, are wound up by a key, and left to play themselves. In such case there is some kind of spring or clock-work which keeps the barrel rotating for a certain length of time, sufficient for the scope of one or more tunes; but the sounding of the pipes themselves is brought about much in the same way as in the grinding organs.

There is a capital story of a barrel-organ told by Mr. Maguire in his Life of Father Mathew. When the great apostle of temperance was a young man, he assisted Father Donovan at a chapel in Cork. The place was too small for a church organ, and the congregation too poor to pay for one, and Donovan frequently expressed his regret at the deprivation. One day, however, he told Mathew, with great delight, that he had succeeded in procuring an organ. "Father Donovan explained how he had procured a barrel-organ, which played Adeste Fideles and the Sicilian Mariners' Hymn, and that these could be fittingly introduced during mass, and also at vespers. The musician worked under his control, and Father Donovan would be responsible for the ad-

mirable effect of this delightful innovation. The Sunday, fraught with anticipated triumph to Father Donovan, arrived. The organ and its operator were in the little chapel, and Father Donovan was having a vigilant eye to both. Nothing could be a more decided success than the Adeste, for many besides Father Donovan thought it heavenly. Nor was the effect lessened by the plaintive sweetness of the hymn. Tears of rapture stood in the eyes of Father Donovan. It was a moment of unalloyed triumph, such as mortals experience but rarely in this life. The last gospel was just being read by Father Mathew, who was the celebrant, when the operator commenced a third air; but—horror of horrors—instead of one of those gentle and spirit-breathing strains that lift the soul to heaven in a flood of lovely melody, out rattled the too well-known air of Moll in the Wad. It would be impossible to describe the bewilderment of the congregation, or the rage and confusion of poor Father Donovan, at this awful scandal, which nearly threw him into a fever from shame and humiliation. His friends were thenceforward rather cautious in their allusion to mechanical music, and indeed organs of all kinds."

Church organs have to produce effects which require far more complete arrangements. Not only must there be more power or volume of sound to fill a large building; not only must there be a wide register or range of notes from grave to acute; but there must also be different qualities or kinds of sound, in order to realise the effects intended by the great composers. One key-board, as in the pianoforte, will not suffice; there must be two, three, or four, in order to set the great array of pipes speaking; these key-boards are ranged one above another, each one a little recessed, or lying further back than those beneath it, but all within easy reach of the organist. Busy work too, indeed, is it for him when the organ is large and complete; his hands require to be strong as well as active; he has to dodge about from one key-board to another, and from the treble down to the bass, "down the middle and up again, and hands across," in country-dance language. And as he, like other men, has only two hands, he makes use of his feet in a way from which pianoforte players are exempt; his feet play a tattoo on a row of pedal-keys, which act on a particular set of pipes known as the pedal organ, and produce sonorous bass notes, grand and solemn in their effect. Even with all this his work is not ended. He has to pull out and to thrust in a series of knobs or small handles, called draw-stops. These are connected with the most intricate mechanism of the organ. Some of the pipes, by a nice adjustment of the vibrating reed or tongue, yield tones bearing a resemblance to those of the human voice; some, by a different adjustment, imitate rather the clarionet; others, again, warble something like the flute; while others give out the martial tones of the trumpet. Now it is so arranged that all the pipes of any one kind can be brought under the action of one draw-stop; those pipes will or will not sound, according as the stop with which they are connected is thrust out or in; and the organist, having control over all the stops, can at pleasure vary the quality of the sounds produced. In large organs there are vox humana stops, flute stops, piccolo stops, clarionet stops, and others named after the trumpet, clarion, bell, cornet, cymbals, bassoon, oboe, dulcimer, horn, flageolet, ophicleide, trombone, bourdon, &c.; also others named (for reasons only to be understood by the initiated) diapason, swell, tremulant, dulcet, mixture, furniture, and so forth. All the stops and pipes played by one key-board have a collective name given to them, such as the pedal organ, the great organ, the swell organ, the choir organ, and the solo organ. The supply of wind is another and very different affair. Hand-worked bellows, mechanical bellows, hydraulic pressure, pneumatic pressure, steam power—all are employed to fill a large chamber or receptacle with condensed air; and then there is a wonderful array of tubes, sliders, apertures, and valves, to admit a proper quantity of air, at a proper pressure, to the pipes which the organist requires to use at any particular moment.

Some of the continental organs are celebrated for their size and magnificent tones. They are mostly in the cathedrals. At Tours the organ has sixty stops; at Weingarten, sixty-four; at Stuttgardt, sixty-eight; at Hamburg, seventy; at Prague, seventy-one; at Seville, the same number; at Frankfort, seventy-four; at Meiseburg, seventy-five; at Rotterdam, seventy-six; at Lübeck, eighty-two. Remembering what we have just said, that a stop comprises a long row of pipes, we shall be prepared to understand how complex must be the internal arrangements of an organ containing seventy or eighty stops. Most of the pipes are made of metal, a combination of tin

and lead, with sometimes a little antimony added; the others are made of wood. Some are square, some round; some are open at the top, others closed. Some are of stupendous size, thirty-two feet high by thirty inches or so in diameter; they emit a gigantic rumbling growl, very Polyphemus-like, rather than a musical note. At the other end of the scale are pipes scarcely an inch long, with a diameter analogous to that of a barley-straw, and a note such as that of a tiny bird. Some costly curiosities have been made on the Continent in the way of organs; such as the Duke of Mantua's organ, in which the keys, pipes, and bellows were made of alabaster; another, in which glass was used instead of alabaster; and one in a convent at Madrid was made of solid silver.

Although not rising to the dignity of the famous continental organs, there are several in London of large size and fine quality. St. Olave's, forty stops; St. Peter's, Cornhill, the same; forty-one at Camberwell; forty-two at Exeter Hall; forty-three at St. Paul's, Knightsbridge; forty-five at Spitalfields; forty-nine at the Foundling Hospital; fifty-four at St. Martin's-in-the-fields; these are some among many examples. St. Sepulchre's organ, made just two hundred years ago by Renatus Harris, and frequently altered since, is celebrated rather for the fineness of its tones than the number of stops. St. Paul's organ, made by Father Smith, and Westminster Abbey organ, by Schreider, have in like manner been so altered that their makers would not know them again. The Colosseum in the Regent's Park once had an organ of large size. The Panopticon in Leicester-square (now the Alhambra Music Hall) had originally an organ regarded in its day as the largest in London; this is the one, if we remember rightly, which is now placed in the south transept of St. Paul's Cathedral for the Sunday Evening Services. Nor are the provinces without their fine organs; indeed, the largest in England are beyond the limits of the metropolis. Nottingham, Doncaster, and Birmingham Town Hall have instruments varying from fifty to fifty-three stops each. The organ at York Cathedral, made about forty years ago, and improved on many occasions since, has no less than eighty stops, and a forest of pipes corresponding in number. The largest in England, down to the present time, is, we believe, that in St. George's Hall at Liverpool. A hundred stops, four rows of keys, a range of notes from G G up to A in altissimo; such is the instrument which Mr. Willis made for that noble hall, and on which organ performances of a high class frequently take place.

The story of one particular organ is the story of something which was to have been, but which has never been, constructed; financial considerations stopped the way. When the Crystal Palace Company purchased the Hyde Park building in which the Great Exhibition of 1851 had been held, to reconstruct it on a grander scale at Sydenham, they planned mighty things in regard to arts and sciences of all kinds. Mighty things they have certainly achieved; for there is probably no such shilling's-worth elsewhere in the world as this; but as the company spent a million and a half sterling in providing it, there has never yet been an adequate return to the shareholders. One of the things planned was to place in the building the largest, most powerful, most magnificent organ in the world. The directors placed the matter in the hands of Professor Sir F. A. G. Ouseley, of Oxford, Professor Willis, of Cambridge, and Professor Donaldson, of Edinburgh—all learned authorities in the science of music. They were desired to collect information concerning great organs, and to advise the directors generally on the subject. The professors agreed that no organ for the great palace of glass would meet the required conditions unless it were larger than any before constructed; else the sound would be too feeble through excessive dispersion. A gigantic organ it must certainly be. It would have to fill a vastly larger space than any other in England. As unfurnished or scantily furnished rooms are always better for musical effect than such as are overladen with curtains, draperies, hangings, carpets, sofas, and the like, the vicinity of a great organ should be as free as possible from such adjuncts. Trees and plants deaden music in a room, while fountains do the like by moistening the air. The professors passed in review the most celebrated organs in Europe, and noticed the circumstances which render them exceptionally powerful; such as those at Haarlem, Rotterdam, Freyburg, Milan, Weingarten, Stuttgardt, Seville, Frankfort, with the Madeleine and two or three others at Paris. Some owe their power to one peculiar stop or set of pipes; some to the number of such sets; some to the effective balancing of one set against another; some to the excellence of the arrangements for the

supply of wind at a high pressure. Some organs will literally make a church tremble, by the amazing power of well-speaking pipes thirty-two feet in length. The professors pictured to their imaginations (for they could only so picture it) the mighty sonorous effect of pipes sixty-four feet in length. After viewing the subject in various lights, the committee of professors recommended the directors to bear the expense of providing an organ so large that, extending across one end of the centre transept from gallery to gallery, it would be fifty feet deep, and rise to a height of a hundred and forty feet. Its bellows would be blown by a small steam-engine. There would be pipes of such tremendous size as to yield a sound four octaves lower than the lowest note of the violoncello. But the cost? Ay, there's the rub. The professors put down the probable expense of such an organ as they had in view at no less than twenty-five thousand pounds. This was a crusher. The directors abandoned the idea; and it was not until many years afterwards that they put up the much smaller (though still large) organ which now crowns the Handel Orchestra.

The organ for the new Albert Hall of Science and Art at Hyde Park, near the Horticultural Gardens, though much smaller than the intended instrument just described, will be by far the largest in England, nay, the largest yet constructed in any country. This building, as is pretty generally known, stands exactly between the Albert Memorial and the Horticultural Gardens, with a frontage in Kensington-road. Why an organ is to be supplied to the structure, will be seen when the purpose of the undertaking is explained; as will also the necessity of adopting very large dimensions if there is to be any organ at all. Soon after the first Great Exhibition in 1851, many corporate bodies and learned societies came to an agreement that, seeing the want of a central institution in the metropolis for the promotion of scientific and artistic objects, an application should be made to the Royal Commissioners of the Exhibition for their aid in the matter. A very comprehensive plan to this effect was formed by the late Prince Consort; but the financial and parliamentary difficulties were too great to be surmounted; and the death of the Prince led to the final abandonment of the scheme. One part of the plan, however, was adhered to; and in 1865 an influential committee resolved on the erection of a hall of arts and sciences, to be named after the lamented Prince. The purposes of the structure were declared to be for "holding national and international congresses for purposes of science and art; for the performances of choral and instrumental music, especially organ performances on a grand scale; for the distribution of prizes by public bodies and societies; for conversaziones and soirées of scientific and artistic societies; for agricultural and horticultural exhibitions; for national and international exhibitions of works of art and industry, including working men's exhibitions; for exhibitions of pictures and sculpture; and for other purposes of artistic and scientific interest." The late Captain Fowke was employed by the committee to prepare designs for such a building; and he was engaged on the matter at the time of his death. In view of the various purposes which the structure was to subserve, he decided on an elliptical form, with abundant means of ingress and egress; numerous rooms and offices for societies, &c., being provided, as well as the great hall itself. Lieutenant-Colonel Scott is carrying out Captain Fowke's plan, with suggestions from various artists and engineers of note. The expense will be not less than two hundred thousand pounds, the whole of which sum has been subscribed; or, rather, the Commissioners of the Exhibition gave the site, valued at sixty thousand pounds; while boxes, stalls, and seats have been leased for a long term of years, and at high rentals. The building, in the hands of Messrs. Lucas, is rapidly approaching completion. It is an ellipse, about two hundred and seventy feet by two hundred and forty. In the centre is an arena, about a hundred feet by seventy, which would accommodate a thousand persons; this will be available for flower shows, conversaziones, and the like. It is completely surrounded by an amphitheatre of seats, that will accommodate fourteen hundred people; and at one end of the ellipse is an orchestra for a thousand performers. Above the amphitheatre are two tiers of boxes, with nearly nine hundred sittings; there is an ante-room behind each box communicating with a corridor running round the building. Over the boxes is a broad promenade, available for spectators of what is going on below; and over this again a picture gallery. And over all is a domed ceiling, rising a hundred and thirty feet from the arena.

Such is the building which, when finished, will contain a magnificent organ, built by Mr. Willis, under the supervision of Sir

Michael Costa and the late Mr. Bowley. The "box o' whustles" will be as big as a mansion; sixty-five feet wide, seventy high, and forty deep; with an additional oak screen of twenty feet in height in front of the masonry platform on which the ponderous mass (a hundred and fifty tons weight) will rest. Five rows of keys, belonging to the choir, great, solo, swell, and pedal organs; a hundred and thirty-eight stops, representing an equal number of pipes; a total of ten thousand pipes in all, which would extend nine miles if placed end to end; a range of nine or ten octaves, from the basest bass up to the most infantine treble; two steam-engines by Messrs. Penn, to blow the bellows—all this does indeed sound vast. There is no external case; the pipes (made of nearly equal proportions of tin and lead) will be burnished and polished in the highest degree—at least those which are visible—and as they will be grouped in four great clusters of spires, the effect will doubtless be grand and beautiful. There will be lofty vaulted openings at the front and sides, to let the works be seen; and at the back will be a perfect forest of pipes. The keys, made of massive ivory, are said to be so nicely balanced that the slightest touch will make the pipes speak; inasmuch that the instrument will be as easy to play as a pianoforte, so far as concerns the pressure upon the keys. All sorts of ingenious contrivances are introduced to increase the power of the instrument and the ease of playing it. The organ was so far finished as to be tested a few months ago; but it must await the completion of the hall in which it is to be placed, and then the world will have an opportunity of seeing and hearing the result of ten thousand pounds' worth of labour, inventive genius, and practical skill.

THE WIFE'S VIGIL.

Watching, watching for ever,
Through the stormy winter day,
While the pale November sunrise gilds
The breakers in Whitby Bay.
While noonday sees the terrible Scar,
All snowy with foaming waves,
As they thunder up to the churchyard head,
Thick dotted with sailors' graves:
Till the storm-drum shows its ominous black,
'Neath the tremulous evening star,
And never a sail on the tossing roads,
Nor a ship at the harbour bar.

Watching, watching for ever,
The passionate prayer is mute,
There's a dirge in each burst of the wailing wind,
There's a knell in each hasty foot.
While children who may be fatherless
Shrink from her stony sorrow,
And pitying friends dare hardly speak
Of joy that may come to-morrow!
For broken spars drift thick and fast
To the rocky Yorkshire shore,
To tell of the wrecks by the Norway firths,
And the cliffs of Elsinore.

Watching, watching for ever,
With aching, haggard eyes,
Straining for hope to the raging seas,
For hope to the iron skies.
While the heavy sleep exhaustion brings
Is cursed with fevered dreams,
Of corpses tossing with tangle and shell,
Where the lonely moonlight gleams.
And the terrible shadow of widowhood,
Worst woe of this weary world,
Draws nigh with every angry wave
On the shivering ice-belt hurled.

Waiting, watching for ever,
Oh quaint old Whitby town,
With red-roofed houses nestling close
'Neath the church on the breezy down!
There is never a hearth in your crowded courts,
Nor a hut upon moor or fell,
But has sorrowful story of woman's grief
And orphaned wail to tell!
God help the brave who win their bread
From the beautiful, pitiless sea,
And teach that mourning watcher yet
What His saving love can be.

IN THE FIELD WITH THE PRUSSIANS.

A PERILOUS POSITION.

The wretched town of Courcelles has become celebrated in history from the fact of its being the last station by rail, on the line from Saarbruck to Metz, from which the Prussians could approach that French stronghold.

At this town I found myself, one pouring wet day in the month of August. It was early morning when, in a waggon, I set out in company with two Prussian officers and their servants, who were under orders to find their regiments, supposed to be somewhere in the neighbourhood of Metz. After a tedious journey all day through muddy lanes and deserted villages, the following was our situation.

Night was rapidly setting in, and the thick drizzling rain was coming down in misty sheets; it was very cold, and, as we drew our rugs closer around us, we longed to find a resting-place. Moreover, we were not very sure that we were going the right way, and this is a particularly uncomfortable feeling when one is in a country which is at war, and in the company of officers belonging to either army.

The cart in which six of us, including the owner, had found room, was an old lumbering waggon, and our horses looked as if they had never been guilty of going more than from three to four miles an hour in their lives, so that, altogether, there was not much chance of rapid progression. In vain the driver plied his whip, in vain he

shouted: the animals had their own pace, and stuck to it. At last a French village loomed through the gathering gloom; we hailed the sight with delight, and entered by the main street. "Hollo, there!" we sung out to a peasant who was striding along. He stopped, came a little nearer, but when he saw the spiked helmets he uttered an exclamation of surprise, turned round, and vanished in the mist.

"There's something wrong," I said to my companions. "Which way does Metz lie?"

"To our right, I think," answered a young lieutenant of Prussian artillery.

"And what is this village?" I asked.

"Don't know," was the answer. And our heavy waggon lumbered on through the paved street.

"This won't do!" said Von Werder, a young Landwehr cavalry officer. "Halt!"

The driver pulled for a couple of minutes at his horses' tough mouths, and we came to a stop.

"Wilhelm," said Von Werder to his servant, "jump down, load your rifle, and make your way into that house with a light in its window. Ask the name of this village, and get hold of a boy or some one to show us the best house in it."

Down jumped Wilhelm, needle-gun in hand. It had an ominous sound, the clapper, clapper of that rifle, as the servant loaded it. He paused a second when he had finished; we waited in breathless silence, and then came the click of cocking the rifle, and Wilhelm strode away through the mud. We saw him go to the door and heard him thunder at it with his fist. It was opened by a man, and Wilhelm vanished behind it. We waited two or three minutes, and then forth he came; he ran up to the cart saying, "M. is the name of the place; the best house in it is close by." Away vanished anything connected with fear, and we only thought of getting out of the horrible weather, and of getting once more warm. We drew up at an old-looking château, situated in the main street of the village, but having an entrance-gate and a garden in front and behind. No light was visible, and we pommelled at the door for two or three minutes without getting any answer. By-and-bye, Von Werder said, "Wilhelm, break that window open!" Wilhelm did as he was told, made his way into the house, and very soon the front door opened, and we marched in to take possession.

It was a fine old place, the marble staircase occupied nearly the whole of the entrance-hall. On mounting the steps we came into a long corridor with rooms opening on to it, to the right and left; most of the doors were locked. When we had entered one room, however, it was easy enough to find other ways of ingress and egress than those offered by the doors opening on to the corridor. The first room I entered had evidently been left in a great hurry; a ladies' wardrobe lay scattered all about the floor; the room was a dressing-room, I suppose, as there were no signs of a bed in it. On going through a door I found myself in a luxuriously furnished bedroom; dust stood on all the tables and other articles of furniture in a thick layer, but it could not hide the beauty and elegance with which the room had been fitted up. The bed had been left unmade, and there was a great state of disorder pervading everything; boxes had been ransacked, chests of drawers and wardrobes had been left open, and their contents partially taken away, the residue being strewn around. In the next room were two small cots, and on pegs were two little straw-hats; the children's boots and playthings lay some on the beds, some on the floor. I now retraced my way through the two rooms I had first explored, and through a side-door came into a little passage, which led through a storeroom into another bedroom. Here I found a bed with clean sheets, and, wonder of wonders, a bath. Of course there were the miniature, almost toy, jug and basin, which seem generally to be considered sufficient in France for lavatory purposes, but to think that I should find a bath! "Delicious," I cried exultingly, throwing myself on to the soft feather-bed. I don't know how long I remained there; it was too comfortable a position to be able to keep awake, especially under the circumstances of a trying day's jolting in that awful waggon. I was awakened by hearing some one say, "Hier liegt er;" I opened my eyes and found Speissman and Von Werder standing in the room.

"Well, you're a nice fellow," said one of them; "we thought that either the French had collared you, or that you had gone to tell them where to collar us."

"Instead of which I have been having a nap," I said. "A thing much more to my taste than either of your former suppositions would be."

I now began to think something to eat would not be undesirable, and asked if anything eatable had been found in the château.

"Nothing," was the answer, "except a couple of glass jars with preserved fruit, and they are most likely poisoned."

"And the cellar?" I asked.

"Oh, that's all right; the old dame has left us plenty of wine, and plenty of petticoats, but nothing else."

"Well, we must feed," I said; "let us see what's to be got in the village."

All five of us went out together. We noticed two or three knots of men standing about in the rain, and we thought this rather extraordinary, but whatever it boded we knew we must stop that night in the village, come what might, as our horses were unable to go another step forward. We asked a villager if there was an auberge near. He pointed to a light on the opposite side of the way, so we went into the house, leaving Wilhelm outside. He was a capital fellow this Wilhelm, by the way; his round good-natured face bore a continual smile, which became more beaming if he thought there was anything at all serious in the wind. He evidently thought something was going to happen on the night in question, for I never before saw his face so radiant with grins.

We prevailed upon the host of the auberge to make us an omelet, and we got some milk, bread, and cheese. We paid the man liberally, and before leaving asked him how far the fortifications of Metz were from this.

"Not far, sir," was his answer.

"Have Prussian troops ever been here before?"

"You are the first, sir."

Wilhelm now put his head in to say "he had seen several men sneaking about the château, and he thought we had better go back if we did not want to lose our things." Wilhelm was given some bread and cheese to pocket, and a drink of milk, and off we started. The moon had now come out, and it had stopped raining. We made our way through the thick, pasty mud back to our château. Our first care was to look after the coachman and his horses; the horses seemed well employed, munching away complacently in the dark. We called and hallooed to the coachman without getting a response; there were his wallet, and his whip, and his bed over the stable, but he had betaken himself out of the premises. Where had he gone to? Would he return with some Franc-tireur friends, or had he gone out merely to satisfy his cravings of hunger? Whatever the reason might be, we gave up all thoughts of going quietly to sleep until this worthy returned. So Hans, the artillery officer's servant, mounted sentry on the cart in the yard, while Wilhelm was allowed to join his lord and master in helping him, and us, to drink the old château's good wine.

"Wilhelm," said Von Werder, "come into the cellar with me; we won't let the old lady think when she comes back that the Prussians were so ungallant as not to drink her health pretty often." And then he said, sotto voce, "I wonder where the old lady and her brats are gone to? I suppose they will grow up into torments to poor Prussia some day; its our turn now, however, so, Wilhelm, vorwärts, lead the way into her subterranean store." Speissman and myself followed, the steel scabbards clattered down the stone steps, and the great wax candle which Wilhelm carried flared like a torch, dropping at each step large flakes of wax. We now came to a door on the same level as the hall; the lock had been savagely torn off. Von Werder, when he came to it, pointed to it and whispered "Wilhelm;" we understood very well what he meant. He had an instinct most wonderfully acute for finding out wine, had this worthy man; while others were running wild all over a house or château, Master Wilhelm would set himself always the task of finding out whether there be any cellar contents or no!

Wilhelm had now gone on, so we had to hasten our steps. We found him engaged in propping the wax candle between three bottles on the top of a large cask, which stood in the centre of the cellar. He then gravely produced from his pocket four new spermaceti candles, and, lighting three of them, he presented us each with one, in order, as he said, to ferret out our own pet wines. Everything was so nicely arranged, and such was the quantity of bacchanalian liquors, that it was rather perplexing to any one, not a thorough connoisseur, to choose. Of course champagne was settled upon as the right beverage for such an occasion by some of us, but I was much struck by a little barrel marked 1815. It had evidently been partially concealed, and this, together with the date, and the fact of its having no sort or kind of name upon it, thoroughly aroused my curiosity.

"Wilhelm," I said, "I think we must have this cask open."

"What nonsense," said Von Werder. "Why not stick to bottles; you'll only get poisoned if you try casks!"

"I mean to try this one," I said. And so did Wilhelm, if one might judge from the hard knocks he was giving the top staves of the cask. At last one gave way, and Wilhelm stooped down to find out, by his organ of smell, what sort of wine it was.

He jumped up, saying: "I've sacked many cellars, but I've never found wine like that before. Vortrefflich!" he exclaimed.

All now gathered round the inky-looking fluid. Wilhelm dipped his tin cup into it, and presented it to Von Werder. He looked anything but pleased with his servant's attention; but after smelling it he became re-assured—first sipped, and then drained the cup, and presently asked for more. We all had a cupful, and then emptying six bottles of vin ordinaire, we filled them with this precious liquor, which, let it be what it might, was very potent. In appearance it was like dark crimson oil. Its taste was unique.

Roaring with laughter, we ascended the stone steps, each carrying an armful of bottles of all descriptions, Wilhelm in the van, as before, bearing the torch-like candle. Our uproarious merriment met with a rude check, however, as we had not got half-way up when we heard the sharp crack of a rifle. Down the bottles were put, some not too carefully, as a cascade of effervescing champagne, mixed with red wine, pouring down the steps over my trousers and boots fully convinced me. However, it was no time to think of one's boots and trousers when one's life appeared in such jeopardy; so pulling my revolver from my belt I hastily joined the rest at the top of the stairs. I heard Wilhelm call out of the door, "Hans was machst du?" We only heard the clapper, clapper, of some one loading a rifle outside.

"Some one has shot Hans," said Wilhelm, "and seems to be loading again. Shall I fire?"

"Yes," said Von Werder.

"Hans!" called out Speissman.

Hans answered.

"Come here," said the lieutenant.

Hans appeared at the door.

The moon was behind the clouds; and as I looked out into the garden, all was still and dark. Wilhelm had blown out the candle before opening the door.

"Hans," said Speissman, "what made you fire your rifle off?"

"I did it to alarm you, sir," said Hans. "I came to the door and called to you, but as no one attended to me, I fired the rifle at the seventh person I saw drop down over that wall there."

We all sallied forth into the garden. There was a small door opening out of the garden, close to where Hans said these seven persons had dropped, and certainly there were several footmarks in the soft mud, and the door stood ajar. Where had these men come from, and what did they want? The only place they could come from was the château itself; and sure enough a window, opening on to the leads, was found thrown up.

We now determined to scour the château. I don't know what possessed me to go alone, but I took a candle in one hand and a revolver in the other, and I found myself back in the comfortable bedroom with the bath in it. I was on the point of going through into the storeroom, when I heard some one behind me. I turned round, and there stood a man. My first impulse was to shoot him dead. I raised my revolver, but before I could pull the trigger he exclaimed: "Mon Dieu! You would not murder me?"

"No," I said. "Of course I would not; but pray what do you want here?"

"The lady of the château has intrusted this house to my care," he said.

"Then," said I, "you had better talk to the lieutenant of the party, and I can tell you you may think yourself lucky not to have fallen in with him first, for he would undoubtedly have shot you!"

With this I raised my voice, and called out: "Von Werder! Speissman! Wilhelm! here!"

Wilhelm came first, with his bayonet fixed and gun full cocked, with a most beaming face. He drew up suddenly when he saw the Frenchman standing pale as a ghost, and shaking all over with fear.

"Wilhelm," I said, "tell your master and Lieutenant Speissman they had better come here directly."

I heard Wilhelm run along the passage and call out, in the loudest voice: "Come, sirs, the Englishman's caught a French rascal. Hurrah!"

And back came Wilhelm, and following at his heels came the two officers with their drawn swords. The poor Frenchman certainly thought his hour had come; his face looked like death, and he shook like palsy. Von Werder asked me how I had caught him. I told him. Then, turning to the Frenchman, he asked him if he could speak German.

"Non, monsieur."

Von Werder then asked me to pump him, and ask him who the seven men were that were in the château. The Frenchman disclaimed all knowledge of there having been any one.

"You lie," said fiery young Speissman, in German; and he put the muzzle of his revolver into the unfortunate Frenchman's ear. Then, turning to me, he said: "Tell this dog, if he does not speak the truth, I'll blow his brains out."

The Frenchman's knees were by this time knocking together, and he whimpered out that perhaps they might have been workmen who had hidden when they heard of the Prussians' arrival.

"Were they armed?" I asked.

"No," was the answer.

"On your honour?" I asked.

"On my honour," said the Frenchman.

"Let the man go," I said, "or he will certainly get a stroke of palsy."

"Yes; let him go," said Von Werder.

"No," said Speissman; "let's make an example of him. Let's shoot the dog, and hang him before his door as an example to other French dastards and liars."

Luckily the wretched man did not understand Speissman's kind intentions. Wilhelm saw him to the entrance-door. Where the man slept I know not; I should think many miles from the château, if one might judge from his horror-stricken face, and his gladness to get away from our company. When Wilhelm came back he said that Hans reported all was quiet outside, but that the coachman had not returned. We now went a second time into the cellar, and returned with the wine to the drawing-room, thinking our perils were over for the night. The size of this drawing-room was immense. Four windows looked on to the garden, and there were two side-doors leading to ante-rooms at each end, besides a large folding-door opening into the corridor. Into this room we tugged six mattresses, and bedding to match, bolted and barred the windows and two of the doors, and then sat down to our carousal. The people of the château had left a beautiful supply of glass, and this, I always think, makes good wine tenfold more pleasant. We were in the middle of a loud chorus when the door-bell clanged. We started to our feet; revolvers were clutched and swords drawn, the lights put out, and down we went. The coachman had come back drunk, and was vowing the destruction of every German in France. Speissman went into the stables, and made the man give him every match he had, so that he should not have the chance of setting the place on fire, left him in the dark, and locked him in.

It was one A.M., and the rain had begun to fall again. We locked the front door, barred up the smashed-in window, and Hans joined our circle of revelry. These Germans sang most splendidly, and, as most of the songs that were sung were old friends of mine in schoolboy days in Germany, I thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated them. On a sudden I started up, hearing a noise outside. "Did you hear that?" I asked.

"No," was the answer.

We listened a second, and then Von Werder burst out with Blücher's song; and, as if by magic, we all joined in its irresistible swell, till we made the ceiling ring again. Just as we came to a moderated part we all heard bump, bump, bump at the door.

"The rascally Frenchman has come back with troops," whispered Speissman. "Why did you not let me shoot the hound?"

Again the lights were extinguished, and once more we descended. We opened a side-window first.

"Who goes there?" asked Wilhelm, in French.

"Hush!" was the answer. "Let me in. I've something important to tell you."

The door was cautiously opened, and a man came into our midst. It was the host of the auberge.

"I've come, at the risk of my life, to warn you," said he, "that you are in great danger here; and if you stay here an hour after daylight you are all dead men. Were it not that the peasants think there may be some more of your men close by, they would inform the French, who are not more than three kilometres off, of your arrival. Adieu."

He turned to go; but I stopped him, and asked him what had actuated him to come and help us, seeing that he was a Frenchman himself.

"Well, you see, sir," said the man, scratching his head, "my wife is a German, and she has heard through the door what these men have been saying; and she would not let me rest till I came to tell you. And, moreover, sir, if you are murdered here my nice little house over the way, and every other house here, won't stand long. My wife says she knows what her countrymen would do—they would raze the whole place."

"She was quite right," I said. "Please present our united compliments to madame, your wife, and many thanks for her goodness."

We then subscribed a small sum between us for the man, and he left bowing and gesticulating, as only a Frenchman or dervish can bow and gesticulate. As he was leaving he said: "There is one thing I have forgotten; my wife heard two men say they would set the house on fire to-night."

"Well," I said, "it would have been a pity to have gone away without telling us that, as it does in a slight degree interest us to know all their peaceful intentions. Is there nothing else?"

"Nothing," was the answer, and the door shut on the man's retreating figure.

We returned to the room; in two hours there would be daylight. The coachman was dead drunk, and the French were not two miles off!

"Well, how will this end?" said Speissman.

Von Werder answered in rather hiccuppy tones: "In — (hic) — prison — (hic) — in Metz!"

"We must have a sleep for an hour," said Speissman, "at any risk."

Wilhelm volunteered to watch; and in our clothes we laid outside our beds. I, for one, slept very comfortably, and when Wilhelm came to call us in an hour and a half's time, I jumped up as fresh as a lark. Von Werder was snoring, and we could not wake him till Speissman bawled into his ear, "The French are coming!" That had the desired effect. It was still pitch dark. No one had been unkind enough to attempt burning the house down. Wilhelm went to rouse the coachman. He came back to say the man was drunk still, and that Hans must come and help him harness the horses. Everything now being ready, Speissman produced his map; the wonder was it had not been produced before. The château we were in was a twenty minutes' walk from a French fort, and almost within chassepot range; we had come at right angles to the place we had intended going to, and we must at any rate retrace our way right through the long village street.

"We are in for it!" said Speissman. "There's not a Prussian, I'll wager, within half an hour's walk."

Von Werder, Wilhelm, and I bundled the drunken driver into the straw headforemost, and Wilhelm jumped in after him to drive. We went two on either side of the cart with our loaded revolvers in our hands, and our teeth set, expecting every second some terrible catastrophe. The waggon of course seemed more ponderous than ever, and as it went with a continuous grinding bump over the roughly paved street, I thought that the way seemed endless. At last we got clear of the village (it was still perfectly dark), and after this the road ascended first to the right, and then gave a sharp turn in the opposite direction. Just at this place, according to Speissman's map, there was a short cut through a wood. The cart laboured up the hill; when we came to the turning-point in the road we halted to find the way. Hans lit a lantern, and preceded the cart.

"Here it is!" he cried out.

At that instant there was a lurid flash in the sky. Von Werder cried: "On your faces!" I went down on mine as if I had been drilling all my life for this event. I heard a boom, and then a hiss, hiss—something struck the road; there was a tremendous explosion, which nearly stunned us all, but did not do any further damage. Wilhelm had no need to urge on the horses now; the old things, snorting and rearing, broke into a gallop; we ran on as fast as we could down the narrow road. Again there was a flash and hiss, but this time the shell was aimed at the ascending road to the left, and it consequently flew over our heads. On we ran, tumbling down, and picking ourselves up, and running on again. The firing still continued. At last we got up to the cart and horses, which Wilhelm had managed to upset over a bank. Everything had been pitched into the road, including the drunken coachman, who was lying there like a log.

"Now, doctor," said Speissman, "here's a chance for you."

Wilhelm now came to me. The dawn had just broken, and I could see that, this time, poor Wilhelm's white face bore no sign of merriment now; he was holding a pocket-handkerchief up to his head, and blood was trickling down his face in large red drops.

"Hollo, Wilhelm!" I said. "Have you been wounded?"

"Yes, sir. But you had better look at the Frenchman first; I think he's dead."

We all went to look at the Frenchman. The man still lay motionless. He was breathing heavily and with great effort. I spoke to him—he was unconscious. I at once thought there must be a fractured skull, and such I found to be the case.

At last, and with much difficulty, we righted the waggon, with the help of the two horses, every moment expecting the French to be down upon us, and then laid our poor Frenchman on the straw inside, and started again. It was luckily light, or we might have got a few shots from the Prussians; no allowance would have been made had it been dark, for the gauntlet we had run with the French.

"What made the Frenchmen fire just at that moment, then?" I asked Von Werder. "They surely could not have seen the light from the lantern?"

"No; but some of those villagers have given the alarm, and the only wonder is they did not give it before. We have had a narrow escape."

At last the cart got to the first Prussian outposts, and the men could scarcely contain their wonder at seeing us thus come from apparently the jaws of death. All was excitement on account of the firing, which by this time, however, had entirely ceased.

Wilhelm's cut on the head was now properly attended to, and the poor French peasant was given into the charge of a countryman and placed in a cottage. At first he appeared to be doing well, but he suffered a relapse, and our unlucky charioteer died the next evening.

THE DOCTOR'S MIXTURE.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER XXXII. SUSPENSE.

With the morning came the cold business-like proceedings that follow on a death; the officials who found their way in, the air of business in the house; while Mary Leader was prostrate in grief. What had happened some hours before, she had forgotten—it seemed like a dream; that hideous drama, seen through the French window, appeared a sort of nightmare. By-and-bye the news got down to Tilston—the waiter told it at breakfast. Billy Webber went up to the Doctor's to learn particulars, but found only Polly there, who knew nothing. Every one was yearning for details. How was Katey "left?"—would the Doctor get anything? People said often "they'd back Fin to get a few feathers for his nest." By ten o'clock a strange gig had passed through, known to contain the family solicitor from Westcup. Later, a fly, containing the master of the dismal ceremonies, who must be thought of at such a season.

As the morning wore on, there was visible, in all that quiet confusion at Leadersfort, the figure of Mrs. Leader, calm, reserved, but still doing work silently. At eleven, when the solicitor arrived, she and her brother were closeted a long time with him in the study. After that interview he came out, wrote letters, and transacted other business. Then followed lunch, for even at such a crisis mourners from a distance partake heartily, and with a relish they seem to reserve for such occasions. The Doctor was still there; he could not leave his daughter in her affliction, and determined that no "snubs," nor insults, even, should drive him from the ground. But there was now a truce.

It was after the lunch that the solicitor went over into the window with the Doctor and Mr. Randall Morrison, saying: "A word with you, Doctor Findlater. We have, as is usual in these cases, been looking into the will to see if there were any instructions about the funeral. There are none."

And the solicitor paused, looking into the Doctor's face, to see what remark he would make.

"You don't tell me so?" said the Doctor.

"No," said Mr. Morrison, "not a line about the funeral being private or otherwise. So we will have it done with all state."

"You may not, of course, be aware," went on the solicitor, "that there is an instrument later in date than the one executed in favour of Mr. Cecil, and in which the whole is devised absolutely to Mrs. Leader, subject to a small but sufficient provision for Mr. Leader and your daughter?"

The Doctor never changed a muscle.

"You will, of course, give us notice before reading out or publishing this paper," said he. "I only say this in the interest of all parties."

"To be sure, my dear sir; I can show it to you if you wish."

"Don't give yourself the trouble. There'll be time for all that when the poor fellow up-stairs is laid in his cold lodgings."

"Yes," said Mr. Morrison, confidentially. "You know yourself, Doctor Findlater, as a man of the world, such an arrangement as that first one could not stand. My sister and I were confident that when reflection came he would do her justice. And after Mrs. Cecil Leader's strange conduct last night——"

"Ah! was that what changed him?" asked the Doctor.

"Well, it was certainly unfortunate for your family," said the solicitor. "But I am empowered to state—am I not, Mr. Morrison?—that Mrs. Leader is prepared even to advance on the provision in the testament, and make everything satisfactory to your wishes."

"Most kind of her," said the Doctor. "However, that will be all time enough. We must not break in, you know, on the sanctity of grief."

This was said with perfect gravity. The two looked at him with a perplexed air. They wanted him to say something either in the way of adhesion or otherwise. But they could not get him to commit himself to anything. It was scarcely satisfactory; but, as he said, all in good time.

Not since the days when the soldiers had come in, was there such excitement in Tilston. There were groups talking, gossiping, and speculating. How had the property gone? Public feeling went rather against the Doctor's chances. Mr. Ridley, notwithstanding the recent lesson he had got, was again heard growling and prophesying.

"The fellow will not get a shilling, depend upon it, and that will be the end of his scheming; and serve him right! These fellows always outwit themselves. Serve 'em right."

Even Lord Shipton could not resist. "I fear our friend Findlater has overdone it this time. You see he is not exactly the man. After all, his daughter did wonderfully; and he might be very fairly content."

At all events, the funeral would be of a most magnificent character, and M'Intyre and Co.'s resources were strained to the utmost, preparing crape and linen in enormous quantities, for those hideous manifestations of grief and respect, which are supposed to be the highest form of compliment to the departed. Lord Shipton was in some trouble about his now well-known vehicle, which he thought could be scarcely appropriate at such a ceremony; but before the day was out he had happily solved the difficulty, by obtaining the loan of a seat in a friend's carriage. But there was presently something more to talk of, for there was observed to be an unusual stir up at the barracks. A hideous rumour had got abroad that it was proposed to remove the Du Barry's Own; an old woman's tale, which was indignantly rejected. However, there was this much in support of the rumour, that the secretary who had perpetrated the "job" was now out of office, and that his successor was an ardent financial reformer: that is, a Spartan curtailer of the salaries of small clerks, and ruthless abolisher of those clerks whose salaries were thus cut down. Still nothing certain had arrived; and after all, here was this prodigious funeral absorbing all attention. Who was to be at it?—who was asked? Was anything left to the Doctor? And how had Mrs. Leader fared in the struggle?

Those strange days of interval rolled slowly by. On the morning after the death, Mrs. Leader, almost awful to look at in her weeds, met Katey in the drawing-room. There was a compressed sternness about the former's lips, and a quiet self-confidence.

"I wished to tell you," she said, "that after the funeral I would like you to begin to make arrangements for your life. You cannot stay here; I am sure you would not wish it yourself."

"Where are we to go? Why should we go?" said Katey, bewildered.

"Why?—why?" repeated her enemy, with a motion as of putting her foot on her neck. "Because—you and your father have lost the game! You lost it for him by your behaviour last night—if that be any comfort for you to know!"

Katey was not thinking of herself, but of her father. "Lost!" she faltered; "you do not mean——"

"Yes, Leadersfort belongs to me—all of it, estate, everything! But you will hear it all read out at the proper time. My poor husband came to his senses at the end, and did what was right, and what I always said he would do. He was not going to hand his fortune over to a set of adventurers. However, don't say that I am harsh. You shall have all indulgence. Take your own time to look about you, and choose how you are to live. You shan't be made a victim of by me! Ah! you forced yourself on us, but I knew the time would come when you would be forced out again."

Katey was overwhelmed by this attack and this cruel news. Yet still it did not so much affect her as did the thought of her father, her poor, earnest, struggling Peter, who was only doing his best for them, and who seemed destined to be baffled in some way all through his weary life. Here he was now. How should she tell him? But she contrived it at last. Peter received the news with a stolid resignation.

"We must only wait and see," he said. "To-morrow will settle all one way or the other; and sure, Katey, child of mine, if the worst came to the worst, ye'd be welcome again in the old house, and I must begin the fighting all over again. No, I'll never lose heart till the old chap with the nanny-goat "bird," and the rag about his loins, has his scythe outside my feet. I don't give up all yet."

"Heaven bless you, Peter, for your noble spirit! But it wasn't I that did any mischief last night?"

"That you did, my poor child," he said, compassionately. "But you never meant it. What in the name o' Corpernicus and all his instruments was over you! To take a woman's brougham in that way, and be away the whole night."

It was wonderful how tranquil the Doctor was as to the unexplained escapade. He listened to Katey's account; how she was afraid that Polly would do something foolish if there was no one to look after her; for as for Captain Molyneux——

"Nothing but a half sort of quishkeen," said the Doctor, musingly, "and he a mere cockmaroo of a fellow."

Towards the end of that day the house began to fill with strange figures and faces. Under the pressure of business, which was immense, the tender sense of grief was stifled. No one had time to think of the poor relics lying up-stairs.

There was so much to be done—so much to be organised; and the anxiety as to success clashed with the grief. Bigginson was the commander-in-chief, who could boast that he had followed more coronets to the grave than any man in England. He had aides-de-camps, deputies, assistants, creatures who arrived with great cases, and enormous stuffed bags, which contained all their grisly propertics. There was a scarcely suppressed buzz of voices through the house, and a great deal of scattered refreshment in different parts of the house, to restore those who worked so hard. Thus it generally is, and to this point all things work up. All the while the Doctor remained immovable at his post. He had received several messages through Mr. Morrison, to the effect that his presence was hardly needed; but of these he took no notice, beyond a protest that a margin of a few hours was scarcely worth talking about. "Only wait a little, and Katey and he would go or stay, according as it was." An enigmatical plea, which made Mr. Morrison smile.

At last here was the morning, with the clustering of groups betimes among the old trees, and the perpetual rolling of carriages up the avenue. What Mr. Bigginson called the most "sumptuous 'erse in town," with coaches to match, was waiting at the door. The tenantry were all marshalled, and though there was little grief, there was still a compound of decency and regretful attitude. All the country round attended, and then the procession moved on to the church.

That had been the scene of their first triumphant appearance—the enthronisation, as it were, of the family, that too short-lived spell of glory, which on that day of inauguration they seemed to think would last for many years to come. "Clarke, the parson," as he was spoken of, and Billy Webber, went through their offices, the latter with an almost touching grief, as though, the Doctor said, he had lost the friend of his youth. The remains were lowered into the family vault, beside those of the late squire. Every one crowded to the edge to look; while all the carriages rattled off with an unwonted alacrity, as though the business were well over.

Some friends had come from a distance to Leadersfort, and for these a great lunch was set out. The family solicitor was hurrying about, passing in and out of the room, while the guests took their lunch. He suddenly came up to the Doctor, and, a little nervously, for he was shrewd enough to have some distrust of the complete unconcern of Doctor Findlater, said to him, "We propose, my dear sir, to read the will in the library, as soon as they have done here. As you are interested for your daughter's sake, I will ask you to be present, with a few other friends of the family."

"All right," said the Doctor, who was standing at the chimney-piece leaning on his elbow. As the solicitor bustled to the door, the Doctor called after him, "Just a word!" and followed him into the passage. "Where's Mrs. Leader?—aren't you going to have *her* down to hear this paper of yours read?"

"Paper of ours?" repeated the solicitor, scrutinising him narrowly. "As for Mrs. Leader, of course not. It would be quite out of all form. But, my dear sir, as I said before, we are prepared to consider any proposal that may seem desirable to you."

"We'll make none," said the Doctor. "We'll be content with our rights—neither

more nor less. I should like to see Mrs. Leader, though, before you read your bit of paper."

"Well, I am sure it could not be done."

"And to have Mr. Morrison, and Katey, and Miss Leader present—just a sort of family business, you know."

"Oh! no," said the other, bluntly, "there is no need of that. We'll have the family meeting in two or three minutes in the library."

"You'll be sorry for it," said the Doctor; "I know you will. But just as you please."

"Oh, I understand—you mean to go on the first will. I can understand that. But I really must beg, Doctor Findlater, that you will make no confusion about this matter. It would be indecent. I assure you all this sort of thing can be disposed of in the regular way among the professional men. There, now, two o'clock—the time has come!"

"Just get them into the study here for a moment—Mrs. Leader and her brother—I won't detain them two minutes and a half. It's vital—it is, I assure you. I'll fetch Katey and Miss Leader."

He was so earnest, that the solicitor looked hard after him, watch in hand; he didn't quite like all this. The Doctor hurried away to Katey's room, where he found her comforting the bereaved daughter: "I am sorry," he said, "but it is really from duty and a sense of justice that *I* would ask you to come down. I wish to save the family from what it would be sorry for. There's no time to spare, or that attorney will be getting us all in the library, and then it will be too late."

They went down at once. On Mary was now coming back the recollection of all that had taken place on the night of her father's death. Perhaps she thought justice was now, in some shape, to be done on those who precipitated that death. She gave a start and hurried down.

As they crossed the hall, they met some of the mourning guests walking slowly towards the library. The clock had struck two, and, as the Doctor said, they had no time to lose.

CHAPTER XXXIII. THE DOCTOR WINS.

THE study was a little hexagonal room; a sort of snuggery, or cosey nook. There they found Mrs. Leader, grave and haughty.

"What does the fellow mean?" she said to the solicitor. "I'll not be waiting on him!"

"Better do so," he said. "There's no knowing what trouble these low rough fellows give on an occasion like this; a little humouring is not thrown away."

In this fashion she was persuaded. But when she saw the others coming in, she again grew defiant.

"What is all this about? Go to the library!"

"Just a moment," said the Doctor, coming in last and shutting the door, "and then they may all go there and hear the will read. But I just want to ask Mrs. Leader one question. Which will is to be read there?"

"The latest executed, of course," said the solicitor.

"I asked Mrs. Leader. Is that the answer? Are you sure, madam—*quite* sure?"

"Is this a last piece of effrontery, Doctor Findlater, you knowing well that you will not have further opportunity?"

"Don't provoke me," said he, in a fury, "or maybe I'll not stand it a second. You don't think where you're standing, or where you're hurrying to, you poor, foolish woman! I ask you again; think carefully which will you mean to have read?"

"The last one. There is no other."

"When was it executed?"

"Last night."

"Who witnessed it?"

"Two good witnesses, as they will be proved at the proper time. I was also present."

"Any one else?"

"No!"

"Yes, there was!"

It was at that moment that Mary Leader seemed to rouse up from the state of indifference in which she had lain, since that night. Her eyes sparkled with eagerness and intelligence, and going over to Mrs. Leader, she said, seizing her arm:

"Oh! stop—stop—remember. Before it is too late!"

"Ah! to be sure. Isn't it all her doing? Will you speak to her, and ask her the same question?—How many saw the signing of that will?"

Mrs. Leader was gazing at them both with an air of dull suspicion and wonder. She had a presentiment of what was coming. Mary drew her hurriedly into the window, and whispered to her. All the rest looked on, amazed at this incomprehensible scene.

As soon as the whisper finished, Mrs. Leader started back with a half-suppressed cry: "False! false!" she said.

"No one ever charged me with falsehood before," said Mary, coldly.

At this juncture Mr. Morrison went over to the window, and said:

"Doctor Findlater, would you come here?" Then to the solicitor and Katey: "Would you leave us for a few moments?"

He was a man of extraordinary penetration for his years, and had long ago divined what was going to happen. The Doctor he did not care about; but Mary Leader—that was a different matter. Five minutes was the whole delay. At the end of that time the solicitor was called for, and a paper put into his hands.

"Unfortunately," said Mr. Morrison, "it seems there is an informality as to the execution of that last will; it can't stand, so we must fall back on the first one."

"It's perfectly regular," said the solicitor. "Are you mad, Mr. Morrison?"

"Take your instructions from us, sir. Doctor Findlater and Mrs. Cecil have behaved in the handsomest manner, and have promised to give effect to the testator's wishes as nearly as they can. Take this into the library and read it."

The bewildered official did as he was told. Katey alone was left with the baffled woman. She drew near, and said, kindly and timorously:

"I do not understand this, but I see there is a disappointment. I am very, very sorry."

"You!—*you!* I could kill you! I hope I'll live to see you down in the dust yet!"

As Katey turned to go, making no reply to this charitable speech, Mrs. Leader fell into a chair, foaming at the mouth in violent hysterics.

Meanwhile, in the library, the solicitor read out the last will and testament; and in a few moments it was known that Cecil Leader and his wife inherited the whole estates, subject to a sufficient annuity for Mrs. Leader. At the same time it got whispered about that the deceased had intended making another will, but that Cecil Leader and the Findlaters (who somehow were always coupled in the inheritance, and perhaps with some justice) had behaved in the handsomest way.

"Oh! father and mother," aspirated the Doctor, "snug under your headstone in Macroom, why Peter, your boy, can now drive his pair o' elephants if he chooses!"

L'ENVOI.

ANOTHER fine morning, about a month after these exciting events, when the whole town is once more astir seeing the soldiers go by. Alas! that this should be in another direction, for a tyrannical and "cheese-paring" government has sent forth the word, and the Du Barry's Own are leaving us for ever. No exertion of the members, or of the county lords, could avail—the "job" was pronounced too flagrant; there was no use for soldiers there; the barracks were dilapidated, and would cost a fortune to repair, even though the rheumatised bones of the men could be repaired. They were all to go, and here was their last morning.

What lines of bereaved women, deserted girls, half-promised wives. Such painful incidents "the route" only too surely brings with it. The gallant fellows—as the newspaper called them—had done their best to earn that title, and here were hearts breaking by scores after them. What was to become of the town after they had gone? Better they had never come, for the reaction would be terrible! As a gentleman connected with horses said, up at the Leader Arms, "it was like extinguishing a lantern in a stable." And he was right in a part of the comparison, whose force he did not appreciate; for the place *would* be no better than a stable. As for young girls like Polly, as well let them take the veil, though some of the female community found a compensating satisfaction in this spectacle of general and particular desertion.

Here, on this touching occasion, as at the beginning of our story, the Doctor's house, at the entrance of Tilston, had every window filled. Peter himself is a little maudlin, but can be consoled by the dignity of recent events. He has actually driven down "in the brougham" to his own house from what he calls "th' 'ead quarters," while Polly is at another window, blushing and excited, but also consoled by the dignity of recent events, and by the consciousness that no one but Katey and Captain Montague is in possession of her secret. She has such a wonderful spirit and elasticity, that it was sure to dissipate any little cloud of dissatisfaction with herself that might hang about her. In the house, too, was Billy Webber, to whom the Doctor had already promised the living the instant "the last breath was out of old Clarke," and who was at his old tricks—rehearsing how he should act as rector. Peter looked on as if the occasion were too sad and serious for such light pranks.

Hark! here is the music—"the *dear*

band," says one of the young ladies—to be heard for the last time. Here is the now familiar clanking, champing, and tramping, the tossing horses' heads, the riders arms akimbo, the fluttering plumes. Alas! alas! was it come to this—the officers all going away "without a scratch!" With the exception of young Cecil Leader, not one of them "bagged."

This was not our Peter's view, who took a high tone, and saw the gallant young fellows "off into the world" with a selfish equanimity. All of them looked up at the windows and saluted Polly, "th' officers' pride," as her father called her; and when the long procession came to an end, here was Colonel Bouchier, on his great horse, pulling up for a few moments at the gate. Out rushed Peter hatless, followed by Polly bonnetless. Quite a crowd gathered to see the farewell.

"God bless you, Peter!" said the colonel. "I am uncommon sorry to pass your house for the last time. You're a good fellow, and I hope we'll meet again, some day."

"And often," said Peter, as warmly. "There'll be a big bed kept at Leadersfort for you; and," he added, looking round in a smuggler-like fashion. "I hope you got the jar of D.D. in time."

"It's on the baggage-cart," said the colonel. "Ah! Miss Polly, I'm sorry to go to lose your bright eyes. We must marry her to some steady fellow. Good-bye, Miss Polly." And with an old-fashioned gallantry, he stooped down and kissed her pretty hand.

Already the music was faint in the distance, and amid a cheer from the crowd the colonel put spurs to his great horse, and cantered away. Two soldiers came a long way behind him, and these were the backs of the last soldiers seen in Tilston.

But let Tilston go down—Leadersfort shall flourish! It was as though blood had got into its veins, and had begun to circulate. Our Peter was lord and master there; more particularly when, within two years, that poor delicate Cecil followed his father to the family vault. And for two years more, until Tom Clarke, the parson's son, came home from India, and went up to Leadersfort every day of his life!—but this is over-anticipation. Peter will allow no dry-rot in that house, and has a perennial succession of house-warmings—company always coming, and going not nearly so often. Among them is seen frequently the young Lord Seaman, who comes and goes, and shoots pheasants, and admires Polly after his own way, and whom Peter is just giving a little law to, he says, to allow of voluntary action, but whom he will by-and-bye take in hand, no doubt, with success. Mary Leader is always there, going to be an old maid, they prophesy; clinging to Katey, whom she loves as her own born sister. While Mrs. Leader is sometimes heard of, as living in some little house in Mount-street, Mayfair, desperately attacking some little meagre redoubt of fashion, commanded by a fifth-rate Lady "Chose," and making frantic efforts to get in. Rarely she succeeds. Her strange face grows plainer every hour; she is one of those fearful objects seen at parties, whose presence there people wonder at—does she go by herself? &c. She will fight this foolish battle for many years—and then——

But Peter, growing stouter and mellower, is quite a personage in the county. No one calls him Doctor Findlater now, that title having dropped like sediment to the bottom. Nothing can be done without him, and his wit at select dinners is now considered of the most refined sort. He has long since broken through the strict London enceinte, and we read in our Court Circular of that choice little dinner to Prince Louis of Saxetodleben, in which his name winds up a list of lords and countesses. But everybody will call him, to the end of the chapter—as I do now, regretfully parting with him — PETER FINDLATER!

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THE ROSE AND THE KEY.

CHAPTER VI. THEY MEET A FRIEND.

"WON'T you wait, and see Mr. Marston?" said Miss Max, a little later, when the young lady came down in her walking-dress.

"No, dear, I'm going to the castle. I have planned three drawings there, and two in the town, and then we set out on our drive to Llanberris, where I shall still have daylight, perhaps, to make one or two more."

"Very industrious, upon my word! But don't you think you might afford a little time to be civil?" said Miss Max.

"I don't know what you mean."

"Mr. Marston said most pointedly, I mean, particularly, that he would call this morning, and you allowed him to suppose we should be at home."

"Did I? Well, that's past mending now," said the girl.

"And he'll come and see *no* one," said Miss Max, expanding her hands.

"He'll see the Pritchards," said Miss Maud.

"I think it extremely rude, going out so much before our usual time, as if it was just to avoid him."

"It *is* to avoid him. Put on your things and come," said the girl.

"And what reason on earth can there be?" insisted Miss Max.

"I'm not in a Marston mood this morning, that's all. Do, like a darling, put on your things and come; everything is packed, and the people here know when the fly is coming to take our boxes, and I'll walk slowly on, and you will overtake me."

So saying, she ran down-stairs, and took a very friendly leave of the Pritchard family.

She was not afraid of meeting Mr. Marston. For Anne Pritchard had told her that he had inquired at what hour the ladies usually went out to walk, and that hour was considerably later than it now was.

Miss Max overtook her.

"It's plain, we don't agree," said that lady, as if their talk had not been suspended for a moment. "I like that young man extremely, and I do think that it is rather marked, our leaving so unnecessarily early. I hate rudeness—*wanton* rudeness."

The girl smiled pleasantly on her companion.

"Why do you like him?" she said.

"Because I think him so extremely nice. I thought him so polite, and there was so much deference and delicacy."

"I'm afraid I've interrupted a very interesting acquaintance," said Miss Maud, laughing.

"But tell me why you have changed your mind, for you did seem to like him?" said Miss Max.

"Well, don't you think he appeared a little more assured of his good reception than he would have been if he had thought us persons of his own rank—I mean two great ladies such as he is in the habit of seeing; such as the people he knows? People like the Marstons—if he *is* one of them, as you suppose—make acquaintance with persons dressed in serge, like us, merely for amusement. Their affected deference seems to me insulting; it is an amusement I shan't afford him. From this point of view we can study human nature, because we can feel its meanness."

"You are a morbid creature," said Miss Max.

"I am trying to discover truth. I am trying to comprehend character," said the girl.

"And making yourself a cynic as fast as you can," said the old lady.

"It matters little what I am. We shan't see to-day a person so reckless of the future, a person with so little hope, a person who sees so little to live for, as I, and is so willing to die."

"Look round, my dear, and open your eyes. You know nothing of life or of God's providence," said Miss Max. "I have no patience with you."

"You were born free," said the girl, more gently than before, "I, a slave. Yes, don't smile; I call things by their names. You walk in the light, and I in darkness. The people who surround you, be they what they may, are at all events what they seem. When I look round, do I see images of candour? No; shadows dark and cold. I can trust no one—assassins in masquerade."

"Every one," said Miss Max, "has to encounter deceit and hypocrisy in this world."

"It won't do; no, it won't do. You know very well that the cases are quite different," said the girl. "I have no one to care for me, and many that wish me dead; and, except you, I can trust no one."

"Well, marry, and trust your husband."

"I've too often told you I never shall, *never*. I need say so no more. How well the castle looks! I suppose it is from the rain last night; how beautifully the tints of the stone have come out!"

It was a brilliant, sunny morning. The grey walls, with patches of dull red and yellow stones, and cumbrous folds of ivy, looked their best, and towers, and arch, and battlement looked, in the soft summer air, all that the heart of an artist could desire.

Going to and fro from point to point, sometimes beyond the dry castle moat, sometimes within its grass-grown court, Miss Maud sketched industriously for some hours, and from her little tin colour-box threw in her tints with a bold and delicate brush, while Miss Max, seated beside her, read her book—for she loved a novel—and, through her spectacles, with glowing eyes, accompanied the heroine through her flirtations and agonies, to her final meeting with the man of her choice, at the steps of the altar.

For a little time, now and then, pretty Miss Maud would lower her pencil, and rest her eye and hand, and think, looking vaguely on the ruins, in a sad reverie.

By this time Mr. Marston had, it was to be supposed, made his visit at the old farm-house, had sustained his disappointment, and perhaps got over it, and was, possibly, consoling himself in his jack-boots, with his rod, in the channel of some distant trout-stream.

I can't say whether her thoughts ever wandered to this Mr. Marston, who was so agreeable and good-looking. But I fancy she did not think of him quite so hardly as she spoke. Whatever her thoughts were, her looks, at least, were sad.

"Whose epitaph are you writing, my dear?" inquired Miss Max, who had lowered her book, and, glancing over her spectacles, observed the absent and melancholy looks of the girl.

"My own," said she, with a little laugh. "But we have talked enough about that—I mean my life—and I suppose a good epitaph should sum that up. What do you think of these?" and she dropped her sketches on her cousin's lap. "If I finish them as well as I have begun, they will be worth three shillings each, I dare say."

"Yes; dear me! It *is* very good indeed. And this—how very pretty!" and so on, as she turned them over.

"But not one among them will ever be half so good as our dear old farm-house, that was so comfortable and so *un*comfortable—so nearly intolerable, and yet so delightful; such a pleasant adventure to remember. I am very glad to have it, for we shall never see its face again."

At these words, unexpectedly, Miss Max rose, and showed by her countenance that she saw some one approaching whom she was glad to greet. Her young companion turned also, and saw Mr. Marston already very near.

He was so delighted to see them. He had been to the old house, and was so disappointed; and the people there could not tell where they had gone. He had hoped they had changed their minds about leaving Cardyllion so soon. He had intended going to Llanberris that day, but some of his people were coming to Cardyllion. He had received orders from home to engage rooms at the Verney Arms for them, and must stay that day. It was too bad. Of course he was very glad to see them; but he might just as well have seen them in a week. Were they (Miss Max and her companion) going to stay any time at Llanberris?

"No. They would leave it in the morning."

"And continue their tour? Where?"

"Nowhere," said Miss Max. "We go home then."

He looked as if he would have given worlds to ask them where that home was.

"My cousin returns to *her* home, and I to mine," said the girl, gravely. "We are very lucky in our last day; it would have been so provoking to lose it."

"She has made ever so many drawings to-day," said Miss Max; "and they are really so very good, I must show them to you."

"There is not time," said the girl to her cousin. "It is a long drive to Llanberris; it is time we were at the Verney Arms. We must ask after our boxes, and order a carriage. It is later than I fancied," she said, turning to Mr. Marston; "how time runs away when one is really working."

"Or really happy," said the young man.

He walked with them down Castle-street to the Verney Arms, talking with them like an old friend all the way.

They all went together into the room to which the waiter showed them. And Miss Max, who had the little portfolio in her charge, said:

"Now, Maud, we must show Mr. Marston to-day's drawings."

And very glad he was of that privilege.

Then she showed him the sketch of the old farm-house.

"Oh! How pretty! What a sweet thing that is! What a beautiful drawing it makes!"

And so he descanted on it in a rapture.

"There is a place here where they do photographs; and I am going to have that old house taken." He said to the young lady, as Miss Max was giving some orders at the door: "I like it better than anything else about here. I feel so grateful to it."

Miss Max was back again in a moment.

"Well, I do think they *are* very pretty indeed," she said. "We'll take the portfolio inside, dear. I'll take charge of it," she said to Maud. "And I hope none of our boxes were forgotten. I must count them. Five altogether."

And she ran out again upon this errand; and Mr. Marston resumed:

"I shall never forget that thunder-storm, nor that pretty little room, nor my good fortune in being able to guide you home. I shall never forget yesterday evening, the most delightful evening I ever passed in my life."

He was speaking in a very low tone.

Miss Maud looked embarrassed, almost vexed, and a beautiful colour flushed her cheeks, and gave a fire to her dark eyes.

Mr. Marston felt instinctively that he had been going a little too fast.

"Good Heavens!" he thought, "what a fool I am! She looked almost angry. What business had I to talk so?"

There was a little silence.

"It is a misfortune, I believe, being too honest," he said at length.

"A great one, but there are others greater," said the girl, with eyes still vexed and fiery.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean being ever so little *dis*honest, and ever so little insolent. I hope I'm not that, at least to people I suppose to be my inferiors, though I may plead guilty to the lesser fault; perhaps I *am* too honest."

Very proud, at least, she looked at that moment, and very completely "floored" looked poor Mr. Marston.

I don't know what he might have said, or how much worse he might have made matters in the passionate effort to extricate himself, if Miss Max had not happened at that moment to return.

That he could be suspected of presuming upon her supposed position, to treat her with less deference than the greatest lady in the land, was a danger he had never dreamed of; he, who felt, as he spoke, as if he could have fallen on his knees before her. How monstrous! what degradation, what torture!

"Everything is ready, and the carriage at the door, my dear; and all our boxes quite right," said Miss Max, in a fuss.

Mr. Marston came down to put them into their carriage; and while Miss Max was saying a word from one carriage window, he leaned for a moment at the other, and said:

"I'm so shocked and pained to think I have been so mistaken. I implore of you to believe that I am incapable of a thought that could offend you, and that you leave me very miserable."

The cheery voice of Miss Max, unconscious of her cruelty, interrupted him with a word or two of farewell, and the carriage drove off, leaving him not less melancholy than he had described himself.

CHAPTER VII. FLIGHT.

THE old lady looked from the window as they drove on, watching the changes of the landscape. The girl, on the contrary, leaned back in her place, and seemed disturbed and thoughtful.

After a silence of nearly ten minutes, Miss Max, having had, I suppose, for the time, enough of the picturesque, remarked suddenly:

"Mr. Marston is, as I suspected, Lord Warhampton's son. His eldest, I believe his only living son. The people at the Verney Arms told me he had actually ordered horses for Llanberris, intending to go there to-day, when his plans were upset by his father's letter. Of course we know perfectly why he wished to go there to-day. I mentioned last night that we intended visiting it this afternoon, and he really did look so miserable as we took our leave just now."

"The fool! What right has he to follow us to Llanberris?" asked the girl.

"Why, of course, he has a right to go to Llanberris if he likes it, without asking either you or me," said Miss Max.

"He has just the same right, I admit, that Mr. Elihu Lizard has."

"Oh! come, you mustn't compare them," said Miss Max. "I should have been very glad to see Mr. Marston there, and so should you; he is very agreeable, and never could be the least in one's way; he's so good-natured and considerate, and would see in a moment if he was de trop. And it is all very fine talking independence; but every one knows there are fifty things we can't do so well for ourselves, and he might have been very useful in our walks."

"Carrying us over rivers in his jack-boots?"

"He never did carry me over any river, if you mean that," said Miss Max, "or anywhere else. But it is very well I had his arm to lean upon, over those stepping-stones, or I don't think we should have got home last night."

"I dare say he thinks his title irresistible, and that the untitled and poor are made for his amusement. It is a selfish, cruel world. You ought to know it better than I; you have been longer in it; and yet, by a kind of sad inspiration, I know it, I'm sure, ever so much better than you do."

"Wise-head!" said the old lady with a smile, and a little shake of her bonnet.

The young lady looked out, and in a little time took up a volume of Miss Max's nearly finished novel, and read listlessly. She was by no means in those high spirits that had hitherto accompanied every change of scene in their little excursion. Miss Max remarked this subsidence, thought even that she detected the evidence of positive fatigue and melancholy, but the wary lady made no remark. It was better to let this little cloud dissipate itself.

In a lonely part of the road a horse dropped a shoe, and brought them to a walk, till they had reached the next smithy. The delay made their arrival late. The sun was in the west when they gained their first view of that beautiful and melancholy lake lying in the lap of its lonely glen. They drew up near the ruined tower that caught the slanting light from the west, under the purple shadow of the hill.

As they stopped the carriage here and got out, they were just in time to see a man descend from the box beside the driver.

They were both so astounded that neither could find a word for some seconds. It was Mr. Elihu Lizard, who had enjoyed all the way a seat on their driver's box, and who now got down, put his bundle on the end of his stick, which he carried over his shoulder, and with a "Heaven bless you, friend," to the whip on the box, smiled defiantly over his shoulder at the ladies, and marched onward toward the little inn at the right of the glen.

"Well!" exclaimed Miss Max, when she had recovered breath. "Certainly! Did you ever hear or see anything like that? Where did you take up that person, pray?"

Miss Max looked indignantly up at the fat, dull cheeks of the Welshman on the box, and pointed with her parasol at the retreating expounder. That gentleman, glancing back from time to time, was taken with a fit of coughing, or of laughter, it was difficult to say which at that distance, as he pursued his march, with the intention of refreshing himself with a mug of beer in the picturesque little inn.

"Call that man! You had no business taking any one upon the carriage we had hired, without our leave," said Miss Max. "Call him—make him come back, or you shall drive us after him. I will speak to him."

The driver shouted. Mr. Lizard waved his hand.

"I'm certain he is laughing—insolent hypocrite!" exclaimed Miss Max, transported with indignation. "I'll drive after him, I will overtake him."

They got into the carriage, overtook Elihu Lizard, and stepped down about a dozen yards before him.

"So, sir, you persist in following us!" exclaimed the old lady.

"To me," he replied, in a long-drawn, bleating falsetto, as he stood in his accustomed pose, with his hand a little raised, his eyes nearly closed, and a celestial simper playing upon his conceited and sinister features, "to me it would appear, nevertheless, honourable lady, that it is you, asking your parding, that is a-following me; I am following, not you, nor any other poor, weak, sinful, erring mortal, but my humble calling, which I hope it is not sich as will be disdained from the hand of a poor weak, miserable creature, nor yet that I shall be esteemed altogether an unprofitable servant."

"I don't want to hear your cant, sir; if you had the least regard for truth, you would admit frankly that you have been following me and my friend the whole of the way from Chester, stopping wherever we stopped, and pursuing wherever we went. I have seen you everywhere, and if there was a policeman here, I should have you arrested; rely on it, I shall meet you somewhere, where I can have your conduct inquired into, and your cowardly persecution punished."

"I have come to this land of Wales, honourable lady, and even to this place, which it is called Llanberris, holding myself subject and obedient unto the powers that be, and fearing no one, insomuch as I am upon my lawful business, with your parding for so saying, not with a concealed character, nor yet with a forged name, nor in anywise under false pretences; but walking in my own humble way, and being that, and only that, which humbly and simply I pretend to be."

The good man, with eyes nearly closed, through the lids of which a glitter was just perceptible, betraying his vigilance, delivered these words in his accustomed singsong, but with an impertinent significance that called a beautiful rush of crimson to the younger lady's cheeks.

"Your name is nothing to us, sir. We are not likely to know it," said the young lady, supporting Miss Max with a little effort. "We shall find that out in good time, perhaps. We shall make it out when we want it."

"You shall have it when you please, honourable lady; the humble and erring sinner who speaks to you is one who walks in the light, which he seeks not, as too many do, and have done, ay, and are doing at this present time, to walk as it were in a lie, and give themselves out for that which they are not. No, he is not one of those who loveth a lie, nor yet who is filled with guile, and he is not ashamed, neither afraid, to tell his name whithersoever he goeth, neither is he the heaviness of his mother; no, nor yet forsaketh he the law of his mother."

The same brilliant blush tinged the girl's cheeks; she looked hard and angrily at the man, and his simper waxed more than ever provoking as he saw these signs of confusion.

"I believe I did wrong to speak to you here, where there are no police," said Miss Max. "I ought to have known that it could only supply new opportunity to your impertinence. I shall find out, however, when I meet you next, as I have told you, whether we are to be longer exposed to this kind of cowardly annoyance."

Miss Max and her young companion turned away. The one-eyed Christian, apostle, detective, whatever he was, indulged silently in that meanest of all laughs, the laugh which, in cold blood, chuckles over insult, as with a little hitch of his shoulder, on which rested his stick and bundle, he got under way again toward the little inn, a couple of hundred yards on.

The driver took his horses up to the inn.

"Well," said Miss Max, a little disconcerted, "I could have told you that before. I thought him a very impertinent person, and just the kind of man who would be as insolent as he pleased to two ladies, alone as we are; but very civil if a gentleman were by with a stick in his hand."

"I don't mean to make any drawings here. I've changed my mind," said Maud. "I'm longing to be at Wybourne again. Suppose, instead of staying here, we go to-night?"

"Very good, dear. To say truth, I'm not comfortable with the idea of that man's being here to watch us. Come, Maud, you must not look so sad. We have all to-morrow at Wybourne, before we part, and let us enjoy, as you say, our holiday."

"Yes, on Monday we part. Don't mention it again. It is bad enough when it comes. Then the scene changes. I'll think of it no more to-day. I'll forget it. Let us walk a little further up the glen, and see all we can, in an hour."

So with altered plans the hour was passed; and at the approach of sunset they met the train at Bangor.

A fog was spreading up the Menai as

the train started. To the girl it seemed prophetic of her own future of gloom and uncertainty.

Other people had changed their plans that evening. A letter had reached Mr. Marston, unluckiest of mortals, only two hours after the ladies had left Cardyllion for Llanberris, countermanding all his arrangements for his father, Lord Warhampton.

Instantly that impetuous young man had got horses, and pursued to Llanberris, but only to find that those whom he had followed had taken wing. As he looked from the uplands along the long level sweep that follows the base of the noble range of mountains, by which the line of rails stretches away until it rounds the foot of a mighty headland at the right, he saw, with distraction, the train gliding away along the level, submerging itself, at last, in the fog that flooded the valley like a golden sea.

His only clue was one of the papers, condemned as illegible, which Miss Max had hastily written for their boxes.

"Miss M. Guendoline," was written on it, with the name of some place, it was to be supposed—but, oh, torture! The clumsy hoof of the driver, thick with mud, had stamped this inestimable record into utter illegibility. Viâ Chester was still traceable, also England in the corner. The rest was undecipherable. The wretch seemed to have jumped upon it. The very paper was demolished. The gravel from the Vandal's heel was punched through it.

In the little inn where he had heard tidings of two ladies, with a carriage such as he described, he had picked up this precious, but torturing bit of paper.

PRISON LIFE IN CUBA.

I DREAM that I am Silvio Pellico, that the prisoner of St. Helena is my fellow-captive, and that an apartment belonging to the Spanish Inquisition is our dormitory. Clasps of iron eat their way into our ankles and wrists; gigantic rats share our food; our favourite exercise is swinging head downwards in the air, and our chief recreation is to watch the proceedings of tame spiders.

I awake and find my bed unusually hard. My bed-clothes have vanished, and in their stead are a couple of hard benches, with my wearing apparel rolled up for a pillow. By a dim light I observe that my apartment is remarkably small, bare, damp, and dome-shaped. The window is a barred aperture in the door; is only a foot square, and looks on to a patio, or narrow passage, where unlimited wall stares me in the face. Do I still dream, or is this actually one of le mie prigioni? I rub my eyes for a third time, and look about the semi-darkened vault. Somebody is snoring. I gaze in the direction whence the sound proceeds, and observe indistinctly an object huddled together in a corner. So, this is no dream after all; and that heap of sleeping humanity is Napoleon himself!

Yes, Napoleon it is! But that is only part of my companion's name; the rest is Rodriguez y Boldú. Napoleón — pronounced with a sharp accent on the last vowel — is a common Christian name among Cubans, and my fellow-captive is a Cuban.

We are both shut up in one of the subterranean dungeons of the Morro Castle; not the Havannah Morro, but the fortress at Santiago de Cuba, alluded to by Tom Cringle.

Why am I here?

Where was I yesterday afternoon? Let me consider. I was sauntering peacefully along the road which leads from Santiago to the Morro Castle, in company with the prisoner of——I mean, Napoleón Rodriguez y Boldú. We had a negro with us, an old and faithful vassal, who at the present moment is enjoying solitary confinement in another part of the fortress. We reached the castle grounds, where a group of Spanish militares were seated. We gave them the Buenas tardes: they returned our salute, and their chief, who was no less a personage than the commandant of the Morro, offered us refreshment, and permitted us to wander about the grounds. In our ramble we paused here and there to admire the picturesque bits of scenery which, at every turn of a winding road, broke upon our view. By a narrow path cut in the grey rock we descended to the seashore, and stood before the entrance of the Cuban harbour. We watched the French packet as she steamed into port on her way to the town, and saw the gun fired which announced her arrival. The steamer was so near, we could scan the faces of everybody on board, and hear enthusiastic congratulations on their safe arrival after the tedious voyage. The skipper conferred with the Morro guard. What was the ship's name? Where did she hail from?

Who was her captain? Where was she bound for? A needless demand, I thought, seeing that there is nothing navigable beyond the town; but it was in strict conformity with Spanish regulations.

As evening advanced, we prepared to return to our temporary home, where a good dinner doubtless awaited us, with a cup of café noir to follow, and correspondence—ah! my friends never missed a mail—to open and to devour.

Alto allá! The ominous command to halt where we stood, still rings in my ear. A party of soldiers, with pointed muskets and fixed bayonets, ran with all speed in our direction.

Car—amba! Were we the object of their precipitation? We were!

They conducted us to an eminence, where stood a podgy, high-shouldered, short-necked man with a squeaky interrogative voice and gold spectacles. This was the commandant. Without explanation, that officer, in brief words, ordered us to be arrested.

The soldiers obeyed. They bandaged our eyes with handkerchiefs. They led us along hollow-sounding alleys; beneath echoing archways; down scores of stone steps; through mouldy passages. Lower yet, where a strong flavour of cooking assailed our sense of smell. A couple more downward flights, and then we paused—heard a jingling of big keys—an opening of ponderous doors—and here we were.

Here, is a subterranean vault, I know not how many feet below sunlight. The air is close and vaporous; the domed chamber is damp and musty. They have divested us of all our portable property save a dozen cigarettes, which we have secreted in a dark corner, and there is nothing to be had in the way of refreshment for love or money.

Yes, for money. I have bribed the sentinel, who occasionally eclipses our square of window, with all my ready cash, and he has brought us contraband cups of weak coffee. Will he treat our dark domestic as well? We try him and find that he won't.

What's o'clock? We have no means of ascertaining this, as Phœbus, who might have suggested the time of day, is a long way out of sight. Our sentinel says it is early morning.

Hark! A sound of many footsteps; a rattling of arms and keys. Enter our military jailer with a dozen soldiers to release us from our present quarters. Our eyes are bandaged as before, and after passing up several flights of steps in another direction, our sight is restored: the scene changes, and we are discovered, like the Prince of Denmark, upon another part of the platform. Our faithful vassal is with us, looking as much like a ghost as it is possible for a negro to appear. They have tied his arms behind him with cords, and serve us in the same manner; while eight soldiers encircle us at respectful distances, and deliberately proceed to load their weapons. The negro trembles with affright and falls on his knees. Misericordia! they are going to shoot us, he thinks; for he is ignorant of the Spanish custom of loading in the presence of the prisoner before escorting him from one jail to another.

To another? Santo Dios! Then we are prisoners still? I think of the victim of Santa Margherita and his many prisons, and begin to wonder how many years of incarceration we shall experience.

En marcha! Eight militares and a sergeant place us in their midst, and in this way we march to town, a distance of seven miles. Our sergeant proves to be more humane than his superior, and on the uneven road pauses to screw up cigarettes for us, and, in consideration of our helpless condition, even places them in our mouths.

It is Sunday morning, and when we reach the town all good Catholics have been to high mass, and are parading the narrow thoroughfare dressed in fashionable attire. Crowds gather around us and speculate as to the particular crime we are guilty of; and, to tell the truth, our appearance is by no means respectable. Have we shot the commandant? Undermined the Morro? Poisoned the garrison? Have we headed a negro conspiracy, or joined a gang of pirates? Friends whom we recognise on our way, endeavour to interrogate us, but are interrupted by the sergeant. We halt before the governor's house; but his excellency is not yet out of bed, and may not be disturbed. So we proceed to the town jail, where everybody is stirring, and where they are happy to see us, and receive us with open doors. A dozen policemen, dressed in brown-holland coats, trimmed with yellow braid and silver buttons, with Panama hats, revolvers, and short Roman swords, are seated on benches at the prison entrance. Passing them, we are hurried into a whitewashed chamber, where a frowning functionary, in brown-holland and silver lace, with a Panama on his head, and a long cigar in his mouth, sits at a desk

scribbling something on stamped paper. He pauses to examine and peruse a large letter which our sergeant hands him, and which contains a statement of our arrest, with full particulars of our misdeeds. The document is folded in official fashion, is written, regardless of economy, with any quantity of margin, and is terminated by a tremendous signature, accompanied by an elaborate flourish, which occupies exactly half a page. The gentleman in brown-holland casts a look of suspicion at us, and directs a couple of policemen to search us, "registrar" us, as he calls it, which they accordingly do; but nothing that we could dispense with is found on our persons, except the grime upon our hands and faces, and a pearl button, which has strayed during the journey, and somehow found its way into my boot.

Nothing further being required of us for the present, we are conducted into the centre of the jail to an extensive courtyard, where a crowd of prisoners of all shades and castes lies basking in the sun. We are led to one of the galleries which surround the patio, our arms are untied, and we are introduced into three different chambers.

The apartment allotted to me is spacious and airy enough, and has a huge barred window that overlooks the main thoroughfare. In these respects, at least, my quarters resemble an ordinary Cuban parlour in a private house. But the only articles of furniture are a couple of hard benches and a straw mattress; and although a Cuban parlour has a barred window, a brick floor, and whitewashed walls, it has also a few cane-bottomed chairs, an elegant mirror, and a gas chandelier.

The prison in which I am confined was originally a convent, and now it is devoted not only to the use of malefactors, but also accommodates mad people, whose shrieks and wild laughter I occasionally hear.

From my window I can see into the private houses opposite, where ladies are swaying and fanning themselves in butacas, or rocking-chairs, while half a dozen naked white and black children play in an adjacent room. Friends passing along the street recognise me; but I may not converse with them, or the sentry below will inform, and I shall be removed to a more secluded part of the stronghold.

I am not alone. My chamber is occupied by a native Indian, whose origin is distinguishable by his lank, jet-black hair, his gipsy-like complexion, and finely cut nostrils. He is neither tattooed, nor does he wear feathers, beads, or animals' hides, but he has all the appearance of a respectable member of society. He gives me his history, together with a few interesting particulars connected with prison life in Cuba. The Indian himself has been arrested on suspicion, but his trial has been postponed for many weary months, and he is at present quite ignorant of the act for which he may stand accused. Having no friends to intercede for him, or golden doubloons wherewith to convince the authorities of his innocence, the poor fellow is afraid things will go hard with him.

He condoles with me; but the prospect he holds out is far from encouraging. I tell him I am a British subject, and that my consul who resides in the town will surely see me righted; which information makes little impression on the Indian, who assures me that my nationality will avail me nothing if I have no interest with some of the Spanish officials. He gives me instances to prove how it is often out of the power of a consul to assist a compatriot in difficulties.

"Not long since," says my friend, "a marine from your country, being intoxicated, and getting mixed up in a street brawl, was arrested and locked up with a crowd of insubordinate coolies and Spanish deserters. His trial was, as usual, postponed. In the meanwhile the jail had become overcrowded by the arrival of some wounded soldiers from San Domingo, and your countryman was shipped off with others to another prison at Manzanillo, where he was entered on the list of convicts, and has never been heard of since."

"In this very jail," continues the Indian, "are a couple of American engineers, both of whom stand accused of being concerned in a nigger conspiracy, and who have been locked up here for the last six months. They are ignorant of the Spanish language, have mislaid their passports, and have been denied a conference with their consul, who is, of course, ignorant of their incarceration."

I make a mental note of this last case, with a view to submit it to the proper authority as soon as I shall be able to do so.

My attention is presently arrested by a sound which reminds me of washing, for in Cuba this operation is usually performed by placing the wet linen on a flat board, and belabouring it with a smooth stone or a heavy roller. My companion smiles when I give him my impression of the familiar sounds, and he tells me that white linen is

not the object of the beating, but black limbs! An unruly slave receives his castigation at the jail when it is found inconvenient to perform the operation under his master's roof. No inquiry into the offence is made by the officers of justice; the miscreant is simply ordered twenty-five or fifty lashes, as the case may be, by his accuser, who acts also as his counsel, jury, judge, and occasionally—executioner!

Whilst listening to the unfortunate's groans and appeals for mercy, I watch the proceedings of a chain-gang of labourers, some twenty of whom have left the jail for the purpose of repairing a road in an adjacent street. They are dressed in canvas suits, numbered and lettered on the back, and wear broad-brimmed straw-hats. Each man smokes, and makes a great rattling of his chains as he assists in drawing along the heavy trucks and implements for work. A couple of armed soldiers and three or four prison-warders accompany the gang; the former to keep guard, the latter to superintend the labour. Some of the prisoners sell hats, fans, toys, and other articles of their own manufacture as they go along. One of these industrious gentlemen has entered, chains and all, into a private house opposite, and while he stands bargaining with a highly respectable white, his keeper sits, like Patience, on the door-step smoking a cigar.

I withdraw from the window to meet my jailer, who has brought—not my freedom? no; my food. It is the first meal I have tasted for many long hours, and I am prepared to relish it though it be but a banana and Catalan wine.

These are, however, the least items in the princely fare which the jailer has brought. The whitest of tablecloths is removed from the showiest of trays, and discloses a number of small tureens, in which fish, flesh, and fowl have been prepared in a variety of appetising ways. Besides these are a square cedar-box of guava preserves, a pot of boiling black coffee, a bundle of the best Ti Arriba cigars, and a packet of Astrea cigarettes; all served on the choicest china. This goodly repast cometh from La Señora Mercedes, wife of Don Benigno, under whose hospitable roof I have lodged and fed for many months past. Doña Mercedes has heard of my captivity, and without making any inquiry into the nature of my misdemeanour, has instantly despatched one of her black domestics with the best breakfast she can prepare.

The Indian assures me that the admittance into jail of such a collation augurs well. I have doubtless friends who are using their influence with the officials in my behalf, and, in short, he considers my speedy release as certain.

Usted gusta? I invite my companion to share the good things, but he excuses himself by saying that, with his present prospects, he would rather not recal the feeling of a good meal. He, however, partakes of some of my coffee, the odour of which is far too savoury for his self-denial, and helps me with the tobacco.

Breakfast over, I take a siesta on half the furniture, and after four hours' delicious oblivion am awakened by the jailer, who comes with the welcome news that the court is sitting, and that my presence is required.

"Imprisoned and tried on the same day!" exclaims my Indian friend. "Then," says he, "I may well wish you adieu for ever!"

A Cuban court of justice, broadly described, consists of two old men, a deal table, a bottle of ink, and a boy. One of the elders is the alcalde mayor, an awful being, invested with every kind of administrative power; the other functionary is his escribano, or legal man-of-all-work, who dispenses Spanish law upon the principle of "French without a master." He professes to teach prisoners their fate in one easy lesson, without the interposition of either counsel or jury. None but those immediately concerned in the case are admitted into the tribune; so that the prisoner, who is frequently the only party interested, has the court, so to speak, all to himself!

The chamber into which I am ushered on the present occasion has very much the appearance of a schoolroom during the holidays. The walls are whitewashed, and half a dozen short forms lie in disorder about the brick floor. At one end of the apartment is a yellow map of the Antilles; at the other is hung a badly painted oil portrait of her Catholic Majesty Isabella, with a soiled coat-of-arms of Castile above her, and a faded Spanish banner half concealing her royal countenance. Beneath this trophy, on a raised platform, is seated the prison magistrate, or fiscal, as he is called. Before him is a cedar-wood table, with a bottle of ink, a glass of blotting sand, and a quire of stamped paper. On his right is an escribano and a couple of interpreters, whose knowledge of the English language I afterwards find to be extremely limited. On his left is seated my captive companion, Napoleón Rodriguez y

Boldú. Everybody present, including a couple of brown-holland policemen at the door, is smoking, which has a sociable air, and inspires me with confidence. Upon my appearance in court everybody rises; the fiscal politely offers me a cigar and a seat on the bench.

As a matter of form—for my Spanish is by no means unintelligible—I am examined through the medium of an interpreter, who makes a terrible hash of my replies. He talks of the "foots of my friend's negro," and the "commandant's, officer's, sergeant's relations," by which I infer that the learned linguist has never overcome the fifth lesson of his Ollendorff. It is accordingly found necessary to conduct the rest of the inquiry in good Castilian.

A great case has been made out against us by the commandant, who represents us in his despatch as spies in league with any quantity of confederates. A pocket-book full of nefarious notes and significant scratches has been found upon me: together with a four-bladed penknife, a metallic corkscrew, a very black-lead pencil, and an ink-eraser! In the commandant's opinion the said notes are without doubt private observations on the mysteries of the Morro, and the scratches are nothing more nor less than topographical plans of the fortifications.

Absurd and improbable as the commandant's story may appear, it would have great weight against us with the fiscal, and considerably protract the period of our release, were it not for the fact that the fiscal is on intimate terms with my companion's family. This fortunate circumstance, aided by the laudable efforts of my consul, who works wonders with his excellency the governor, enables us to be set at liberty without further delay. There is, however, some difficulty in the case of our black attendant, whom the authorities would still keep in bondage, out of compliment to stern justice; but we intercede for him, and he accompanies us from jail.

Crowds of people await outside and escort us to our home, where dear old Don Benigno, his amiable señora and family, welcome us with joy. Wherever we go, we are lionised and loaded with congratulations and condolence. A kind of patriotic sentiment is mixed up with the public sympathy; Spanish rule being extremely distasteful to a Cuban, and any opportunity for expressing his disgust of an incompetent ruler being hailed by him with delight. All my Cuban friends—and, to say the truth, many of the Spaniards themselves—are unanimous in their disapproval of the commandant's conduct.

But I have not yet done with the commandant. A year after the events recorded I am on his grounds again. This time, however, I am there in the capacity of guest. I am rusticating at a small fishing-village called La Socapa, which is situated at the narrow entrance of the Cuban bay, and exactly faces the Morro Castle. Here I make the acquaintance of a young Spanish officer. He has invited me to accompany him to the formidable fortress, and we hire a small canoe and row across the harbour.

The officer's uniform is an all-powerful pass wherever we go. It enables us to land, to pass the various sentries, who touch their caps respectfully as we approach, and finally to reach the commandant's private dwelling in the very heart of the stronghold.

El señor comandante is at home, and invites us in. He is delighted to see his young friend the captain, and charmed to form the acquaintance of the captain's companion. He does not recognise me in the least, and satisfied of that fact, I accept his pressing invitation to lunch with himself and officers.

After coffee and cigars, our host offers to show us the secrets of his prison-house. This time my eyes are not bandaged, and I follow the commandant without military assistance.

We are shown all over the fortifications. We inspect minutely the old-fashioned twenty-four pounders; rest on the six bronze French guns (which, we are told, are quite new, and the only serviceable weapons in the fortress), and make other observations, which, if we were enemies with an inclination to storm the place from the sea, would greatly assist us in our operations. Now we are in the sleeping caves, where the hundred men who compose the garrison are lodged. Now we are descending flights of stone steps. We pass along hollow-sounding alleys and under echoing archways. Presently we arrive at the cooking department, where the atmosphere feels oppressive, and is black with innumerable flies. We come at last to the deepest part of the fortress, where "criminals of the worst description" (so the commandant informs me) are lodged. Narrow, intricate passages lead to the different cells. Our guide points out some of the prisoners, and invites us to look in at them through their little square windows. Strange to say, he does not seem to be at all

conversant with the nature of their offences. "Dios sabe!" accompanied by a shrug of the shoulders, is invariably the commandant's reply to any query respecting a particular prisoner. Dios sabe may, however, signify a great deal more than "Heaven knows;" and, perhaps, the commandant chooses not to explain himself.

We pause before a dungeon where it is said a Chinaman committed suicide after six days' incarceration: self-slaughter among Celestials being their favourite mode of killing care. An equally suicidal Chino is confined there now; but they have bound him hand and foot, and he lies muttering in falsetto like a maniac. He would doubtless give something for a little soothing opium!

My friend the commandant assures me that the vault I am now surveying with such interest, is unoccupied, and persuades me to pass on. But I linger lovingly at the little square window, and take a fond look at the interior. The theatre of my woe has changed in appearance, the company having gone. But there still remain the empty benches!

"Whom have you had within the past twelve months?" I ask.

"Dios sabe!"

It is not the commandant's business to know where his prisoners are quartered, or what becomes of them

I apply afterwards for the same information to the captain of the garrison.

"Dios sabe!"

The staff of officers engaged in the Morro service is relieved once a month, and the captain I address has only lately taken the command.

Dios sabe? In the majority of cases, it is, indeed, Heaven alone who knows what becomes of unfortunates in a country where law is directed through the agency of military despotism, and where the disposal of a man's life and liberty is intrusted to the mercy of a vain and capricious commandant.

GERMAN HUSSAR SONGS.

I.

MINNY, reach me out your hand,
'Tis a true pledge understand.
Love is our eternal lot,
Mind these words, "Forget-me-not."
Minny, I will think of you
Till this sabre snaps in two.

Lizzy, when away from thee,
I am steeped in misery,
Without thee my life is lost
All the summer long in frost.
Lizzy, I will dream of you
Till this sabre snaps in two.

When to the parade I go,
Fanny absent, all is woe,
In my heart Love's arrow burns
Till the moment she returns.
Though this sabre snap in two,
Fanny, I will think of you.

Last night I'd a dream of thee,
Mary, if you'll credit me,
You had loved me dearest best,
Chosen me from all the rest.
Mary, I will think of you
Till this sabre snaps in two.

Had I in this world the gold
Of King Crœsus, ay, twice told,
Would it be as dear to me,
Sweetest, as the love of thee.
Bessy, I will think of you
Till this sabre snaps in two.

Kitty's little sugar mouth,
Stops Love's very keenest drouth.
Kitty (don't let people hear),
You must be my wife, my dear.
Kitty, I will think of you,
Though this sabre snaps in two.

II.

With careless hearts and full of glee
We charge upon the enemy;
But, ere we mount brave fame to seek,
We kiss our darling's lip and cheek,
And parting, parting, cry Hurrah!

Now, forward, men! There stands the foe!
As fast as thunderbolts we go,
United by a holy band,
For God and for the Fatherland,
And all, and all with an Hurrah!

See how the foemen turn and fly
When our red sabres meet their eye.
No mere revenge has given us breath,
Our cry is "Victory or Death!"
And all, and all with an Hurrah!

Then back so gaily we repair:
Sunshine and Love fill all the air,
And welcome is the cry we hear
As home we reach, and far and near
They shout and shout, as we Hurrah!

T. S.

THERE is a tendency amongst many of us to abbreviate the names and titles both of persons and things of which we happen to be fond, and in many cases to call them only by their initial letters. Thus, more than seventeen years ago, the history of that journal, of which this is the successor, was narrated in its own columns by its founder and conductor, under the title of "H. W." Similarly I now purpose giving to the world some information relative to an establishment with which I am connected, and which is known to two or three persons at least in every town, and almost every village of the British Isles, as T. S.

T. S. never sleeps, never slumbers even, never so much as closes an eye; T. S. has

always a thirst for news; is always eager to receive, eager to impart it. The oldest frequenter of a Pall Mall club window never during the course of his life heard a millionth part of the news which comes to T. S. in a day. The most inveterate gossip of a country town never lived long enough to give utterance to a thousandth part of the rumours which T. S. spreads abroad in the course of an hour. And the character of its news is varied and miscellaneous. The capitulation of the emperor at Sedan, and the result of the "rattling little mill" between the Tutbury Pet and the Brighton Bruiser; the speech delivered by Mr. Bright, at Birmingham, and the fact that Claribel is scratched for the Liverpool Steeple Chase; the birth of another grandson to the Queen, and the horrible death of a lunatic—all this news comes pouring into T. S. at the same time, and struggles for priority and precedence. Hither comes a mysterious whisper from the dusky Ind relative to grey shirtings and sicca rupees; here are the words of deep import which but half an hour ago fell from the lips of the United States President at the White House; here is the account of the railway smash which took place this morning in the far North, with the names and condition of the injured; and here news of the gallant rescue of a ship's crew by the Penzance lifeboat. T. S. keeps its finger on the pulse of the gold exchange at New York, and records its every throb; T. S. vibrates with the rise and fall of the indigo market, sent to it from the distant Indian fields. T. S.'s ramifications extend everywhere: winding under our feet in the City streets, running by our side along the country roads, wriggling along the slimy wall of the railway tunnel, swinging from chimney-stack to gable-end over our houses, and lying at the bottom of the ocean, amid the wrecks and coral reefs, the lost treasure, the dead men's bones, and the wondrous stores of which nothing will be known until the sea gives up its dead. The highest and the lowest, the busiest and the idlest, acknowledge its influence; neither the Queen nor the prime minister ever dream of going beyond its jurisdiction. Baron Rothschild whispers to it what he wishes said to the representatives of his house in Frankfort, Colonel de Boots mentions to it what he wishes for dinner at the hotel at Richmond. Through its aid the son in London tells the miner father in Cornwall that his child is dead, and by its means the duke at his castle in Aberdeenshire supplicates the immediate attention of the London physician to the sudden illness of her grace. In each and all of these cases T. S. is called into requisition, for T. S. is the official and familiar abbreviation of Telegraph Street, the great central station of the Postal Telegraph Department.

Telegraph Street is a small and narrow street, which looks like a cul-de-sac, but which finds an outlet in a very narrow court. Close by the entrance to this court stands the huge block of buildings which we must still describe as T. S. The first room on the ground floor is the porter's lodge, where the porter, in a bright scarlet coat, which makes him look like a newly issued copy of the Post Office Directory, is basking in the warmth of his fire, and placidly regarding the floral decorations, appropriate to the Christmas season, with which he has surrounded himself. The next room is the surgery, medical attendance for the staff being duly provided by the department, and the next the room in which the accounts of the dealings with the various companies for the transmission of news are entered, checked, and examined. Of these news companies there are three, the Central Press, the Press Association, and the Lombard, and the "flimsy" from the representatives of these three companies is perpetually in course of reception and transmission at T. S., from five A.M. till three the next morning. In addition to this news supply, certain of the leading provincial journals have a special wire communication direct from T. S. to their offices, which is reserved after seven P.M. for the use of their London correspondents, for whom a room is also provided. On the ground floor are also the dining and cloak rooms for the male staff, and the office from which the messengers are despatched. Only a portion of the messages for City delivery are sent out from T. S., reserved forces of boys being maintained at Gresham House and other neighbouring offices. At T. S., the messages for delivery are sent into the office down a pipe enclosed in a leather case, and are dealt with by three or four young ladies, who put them into envelopes and hand them to the boys. T. S. has many regular customers, and for each of these a special stock of envelopes, with printed name and address, is provided. There are one hundred and sixty-seven of these messenger boys, who are duly drilled, and kept as much as possible under military discipline. They do not receive regular

wages, but are paid by "docket," the sums which they receive for each message varying between a halfpenny, three-farthings, and a penny, according to the distance which they have to travel. This plan has been found successful, not merely by increasing the spirit of emulation among the boys, but by inducing them to return direct to the office with a view of getting more work, rather than yielding to the temptations of chuck-farthing and post-vaulting, to which they are continually exposed.

On the first floor, passing by the offices of the superintendent and the engineer-in-chief, I enter an enormous room, known as the Metropolitan Gallery. It is filled with young ladies, all busily at work, and, looking at them, the first thing which strikes the visitor is the enormous number of ways in which the human hair is capable of being dressed, and the singular sameness in the cut, though not in the quality, of the costume of the period. Here are girls with chignons of every kind; the enormous, the bulbous, the flattened half-quartern loaf, the three sausages, the plaited horse-tails, the bunch of frizz. Here you may find Madonna-like bands flattened to the cheek; crisp, saucy little accroche-cœurs; foreheads either hog-maned—that is, with the hair cut straight across them—or with a single row of little curls, like the medallion portrait of Nero in Goldsmith's History, and occasionally, but very seldom, one may see the dear old corkscrew ringlet of one's childhood, which we found so captivating in the year—— no matter what. These young ladies are seated at the long rows of tables crossing the room from end to end, and, with few exceptions, each one has before her a single needle or printing instrument, the "circuit," or place with which it is in communication, being denoted on a square tablet, something like a headstone in a cemetery, erected immediately in front of her. It may further be remarked of these young ladies, that they talk much less than might be expected, work very quickly, and have generally very nice hands.

The Metropolitan Gallery, consisting of a set of three large rooms, is simply used as a centre for the collection of messages from the metropolitan district. It is arranged upon the plan of the postal districts, with which the public are now familiar, and each division is under the superintendence of a clerk in charge. All messages are brought to the central sorting-table, and there subdivided: those for the country being sent to the upper or Provincial Gallery by a lift, those for the City being sorted into different batches, and despatched by the agency of a pneumatic tube to the delivery station nearest to their destination. These pneumatic tubes, through which messages are being perpetually shot all day long, have been found of great service, and are now in operation between T. S. and the principal delivery stations in the City, while they are also used by the Anglo-American, the Indo-European, and the Falmouth and Gibraltar offices, for the transmission of messages to the central station. It should be here noticed that the messages for the Continent received at T. S. are dealt with entirely by members of the male staff, a mixed assemblage of foreigners and Englishmen conversant with foreign tongues. As I walk down the gallery, accompanied by the superintendent, I am allowed to pause where I please, ask such questions, and make such observations, as I desire. Thus, pausing for an instant by the side of the young lady to whose memory a tombstone inscribed "Holborn" has been erected, I find her at fifty-four and a half minutes past three P.M. writing off the last words of a message which had been handed in at the office on Holborn Viaduct at fifty-three minutes past three P.M., and which will thus have been completed and ready for sending out for delivery within two minutes. The young lady beside whom I next halt is, perhaps, a little short in her reply, which I can readily excuse when I learn that from the south-western district, with which she is in communication, she has to receive twenty-seven identical messages, sent by one man to different addresses, a monotony which must be painful to the soul of the most zealous operator. Here in this south-western division are what are known as the "official circuits," worked by the A B C instrument, with the grinding handle and the alphabetical depressible keys familiar to most of us, which communicate with the War Office, the Foreign Office, the Treasury, the Admiralty, the Houses of Parliament, and the whipper-in. Here, too, is the last specimen left throughout the building of what at one time used to be the favourite telegraphic instrument, the "double needle," which is used for communication with Buckingham Palace. At Windsor, Osborne, and Balmoral there are telegraphic instruments, under the charge of a clerk, who travels with the Court, to which he has been attached for some years; while Sandring-

ham, Badminton, the seat of the Chancellor of the Exchequer at Caterham, and the country-houses of various other noblemen and officials, are similarly furnished.

The work in the Metropolitan Gallery, which is always great, is largely increased on the occasion of any of our great cockney festivals, such as the Derby, or the University Boat Race. A dense fog, too, brings much extra business for them, and the wires, but for the precaution which the department has been able to make against sudden pressure, would be choked with messages explaining the impossibility of keeping appointments already made. All the messages for the tube stations are sorted into different pigeon-holes marked with the name of the superintendent. The increase in the delivery of messages from Gresham House has been so great since the transfer of the telegraphs to Government, that a second pneumatic tube for communication between it and T. S. is in contemplation. Some idea of the business done may be guessed, when it is stated that there are already three hundred and thirty-four of these delivery stations in London, and that their number is still increasing.

The principal difference between the Metropolitan and the Provincial Galleries lies in the fact, that in the latter the tombstones bear the names of provincial towns, instead of those of familiar streets and suburbs. Otherwise, the work is controlled and carried on very much in the same way; there is the same variety of chignon, the same quietude and industry. Necessarily, however, the Provincial Gallery is more interesting as a show-place for the display of tours de force than the Metropolitan. Thus, I am taken to one of the Liverpool circuits, furnished with one of Hughes's instruments, the speciality of which is, that it records the messages in actual Roman type, and am invited to communicate with the clerk at the instrument in the Liverpool office. I do so, and in less than a minute and a half I see his printed reply to my message come winding, snake-like, out of the instrument. This Liverpool, by the way, is a very cormorant of telegraphic communication. Already it has eleven direct circuits from T. S., and five from the Stock Exchange, making sixteen in all; but it is still clamorous for more, and is likely to have its wishes gratified. There is probably some grumbling among the Dicky Sams to-day, for there is a break-down in their direct communication with Bristol, and the Liverpool messages for Bristol are being sent to London for transmission. Manchester is all right; here is the Wheatstone instrument to Manchester, the operator at which tells as that she has sent nearly three hundred and forty messages to Manchester between eleven and three o'clock to-day. This is considered rather a dull time in T. S. During the busy season, the daily average of messages sent, exclusive of press messages, has been nearly twenty thousand; now it is about sixteen thousand. We can check these figures, if we like, by the aid of the superintendent of one of the check-tables close by. Her account, she says, stands at this time (quarter to five P.M.) at six thousand five hundred messages; each of these has been sent twice, representing a total of thirteen thousand, and there is yet plenty of time for the receipt of more. Yesterday was the first day of the opening of the submarine line to Jersey. The messages, which were formerly sent by way of France, now go direct to the island, and the charge, which used to be six-and-eightpence for twenty words, is now one shilling.

This extraordinary collection of apparently the brass butt-ends of fishing-rods, with thin coils of wire running around and between them, is one of the most important of the internal arrangements at T. S. It is called the testing-box, and, as its name imports, is the place where the trial of the state and efficiency of all the wires is made. When the engineer's attention is called by a clerk to a fault in the wire which he is working, each one of which has a separate number and letter, he proceeds to the test-box, and, by means of the galvanometer in connexion therewith, he is able to ascertain at once whether the fault or fracture is at his end of the wire. Finding it is not there, he then proceeds to test the wire in the various sections into which it is divided; thus, supposing it were a north-western wire, he would test the section between T. S. and Euston, then between Euston and Wolverton, then between Wolverton and Rugby, and so on, until he hit upon the section, and, finally, upon the immediate locality where the fault lay; when the divisional engineer would be instructed as to its whereabouts, and ordered to remedy it. Nearly all the wires radiating from the station are tested at six A.M. every morning, when every terminal station is spoken to and expected to reply, to see if the lines are right throughout. It is calculated

that there are nearly sixty miles of wire under the floor of the Provincial Gallery, merely for making local connexions with batteries, &c.

Another interesting object is the chronopher, or instrument from which all England is supplied with the correct time. Sixteen of the most important cities in the kingdom are in direct communication with this instrument, which is in itself in direct communication with the Observatory at Greenwich. At two minutes before ten every morning all other work is suspended, in order that there may be no interference with what is called the "time current," which, precisely at the striking of the clock, flashes the intelligence to the sixteen stations with which it is in communication. And not merely at these large towns, but at every post-office throughout the kingdom, the clerks at two minutes before ten are on the look-out for the signal which is being passed along their line, and the clocks are adjusted accordingly. Messrs. Dent, Benson, and all the principal watchmakers in London receive the time every hour from this chronopher. Time guns at Newcastle and at Shields are also fired at one P.M. by batteries connected with the chronopher at T. S., the clock attached to which is regulated for accuracy to the twentieth part of a second.

The principal instruments in use at T. S. are the single needle, the Morse inker, the Hughes, and the Wheatstone's automatic.

The single needle instrument conveys its information by the varying vibrations of an indicator or "needle" between two fixed ivory stops. It is read by the eye, and its signals are transitory. It is as though the minute-hand of a small clock, or a large watch, were caused by the electric current to perform rapid calisthenic exercises between the points that indicate eleven and one o'clock. If the minute-hand made two violent efforts to show that it was one o'clock, and after each effort returned exhausted to noon, it would simply indicate the letter M. If parting to go the right way, it made two powerful efforts to go the other way and retired after each effort equally unsuccessful, it would simply indicate the letter I; one such tick to the right would be T, one to the left E. The letters of the alphabet are thus formed by the movements of the indicator to the right and left of some fixed point, and every word is so spelt out letter by letter.

The Morse instrument is different. It depicts its telegraphic language on a long piece of paper that unrolls itself by machinery in tape-like fashion beneath a revolving wheel, one half of which is constantly enjoying a cold bath of ink. While no electric current flows, the paper is free from this circular pen. When the current is caused to speed its lightning career, the paper is pressed against the wheel, and a thin blue line is traced by the ink which the revolving wheel carries with it on the paper with beautiful regularity. If a current of very short duration be sent, there is simply a dot, like a full stop, registered on the paper. If the current be maintained for a little longer period, we have a —— shown. One dot is the letter E, one dash the letter T, a dot and a dash the letter A, and a dash and a dot the letter N. The letters of the alphabet are thus made up of a series of dots and dashes.

The signals in both instruments are made by the depression of a small lever, which is seized by the forefinger and thumb, and depressed like the key of a piano. The needle instrument has two keys, one for the movements to the right, the other for the movements to the left. The Morse instrument has but one key, which is depressed as though the telegraphic manipulator wished to play crotchets and quavers on one note, the crotchets forming the dots, the quavers the dashes.

The Hughes instrument is most readily appreciated by strangers, as it records the message in actual Roman type.

As regards the Wheatstone instrument, it is only necessary to point out that the speed of the ordinary Morse is dependent upon the rate at which a clerk can manipulate his key. Forty words a minute is very fast sending, and few, if any, clerks can reach forty-five words per minute. But there is no limit to the speed of the electric current, and if the messages are sent mechanically, that is, if the varying number and duration of the currents required to indicate a despatch are dated out by a machine moving with great speed, we are not only independent of the limited powers of the human hand, but made free from the liability to error in meting out the proper duration of the signal. Thus great accuracy and great speed can be simultaneously attained.

There are instruments, also, that appeal to the ear as well as to the eye. Bright's bell is an instrument which indicates its telegraphic language by sound; bells of

different notes struck by little hammers connected with the right and left movements of the needle, and the dot and dash of the Morse. These little tinkling talkers rattle forth their information with great speed, and many clerks are to be seen writing for their very lives to keep up with the rapid rate at which the bells are speaking.

The staff at present employed by T. S. consists of seven hundred and forty-six clerks, of whom two hundred and seventy-eight are men, and four hundred and eighty-eight women. Of the latter, some come on duty at eight A.M., and leave at four P.M.; others arrive at twelve noon, and leave at eight P.M. It is noticeable that no women are on duty before eight A.M. or after eight P.M.; but the night duties are performed by a special night male staff, who are employed from eight P.M. to nine A.M., under the superintendence of a clerk in charge. Before the transfer of T. S. to the Government, the male and female staff were kept rigidly apart, and marriage between any members of either entailed the loss of situation on both the contracting parties. But a paternal Government looks upon these matters with a much more benevolent eye, and so far from forbidding matrimony, is understood to encourage it. There have already been several matches between members of the staff, and many of the young ladies who have married young men not in the service of the department, have continued in their situations. It is a noteworthy fact that the fashionable institution of five o'clock tea is in its fullest force at T. S., that refreshment being provided gratuitously for all those on duty. The tea—I tasted it—is excellent, and so, I may remark, for the guidance of any political economists who may be startled by the liberality, is the policy which provides it. For, as it is, the cups are placed by the side of the operators, who take their sips, as Mr. Arthur Helps wrote his charming Essays, "in the intervals of business;" whereas, if they had to go and get it themselves, an amount of time, much more than the equivalent of the cost of the tea, would be lost.

Altogether, taking leave of T. S., it is impossible not to feel that, notwithstanding certain errors and short-comings, which were inevitable in entering upon a concern of such magnitude, the establishment is in a most healthy state, day by day increasing both its business and its efficiency, and likely by-and-bye to compare not unfavourably with its elder sister, the Postal Service, which is unquestionably the finest in the world.

LEAVES FROM OLD LONDON LIFE: 1664-1705.

The Scottish newspapers recorded, not long ago, some instances of mirages in the Firth of Forth exactly like the freaks of the Fata Morgana in the Straits of Messina, and on three distinct occasions the Bass Rock has assumed, to the eyes of the crowds upon the sands of Dunbar, the form of a giant sugar-loaf crowned by battlements, while the Island of the May seemed broken into several portions, which appeared to be perforated by caverns where none, in fact, exist.

Such optical delusions have been common at all times in certain states of the atmosphere, and science finds a ready solution for them; but in the days of our forefathers, they were deemed the sure precursors of dire calamities, invasion, or pestilence.

The years shortly before and after the beginning of the last century seem to have been singularly fruitful in the marvellous; and the most superstitious Celtic peasant in the Scottish glens or the wilds of Connemara would not have believed in more startling events than those which are chronicled in the occasional broadsides, and were hawked about the streets of London by the flying stationers of those days.

To take a few of these at random: we find that all London was excited by strange news from Goerce, in Holland, where, on the evening of the 14th of August, 1664, there was seen by many spectators an apparition of two fleets upon the ocean; these, after seeming to engage in close battle for one hour and a half (the smoke of the noiseless cannon rolling from their sides), vanished, as if shown from a magic-lantern. Then appeared in the air two lions, or the figures thereof, which fought three times with great fury, till there came a third of greater size, which destroyed them both. Immediately after this, there came slowly athwart the sky, as represented in the woodcut which surmounted this veracious broadsheet, the giant figure of a crowned king. This form was seen so plainly, that the buttons on his dress could be distinguished by the awe-stricken crowd assembled on the sands. Next morning the same apparition was seen again; and all the ocean

was as red as blood. "And this happening at this juncture of time," concludes the narrator, "begets some strange apprehensions; for that, about six months before Van Tromp was slain in war with England, there was seen near the same place, an apparition of ships in the air fighting with each other."*

Sixteen years later, another broadsheet announced to the metropolis, that the forms of ships and men also had been seen on the road near Abington, on the 26th of August, 1680, "of the truth whereof you may be fully satisfied at the Sarazen's Head Inn, Carter-lane." It would seem that John Nibb, "a very sober fellow," the carrier of Cirencester, with five passengers in his waggon, all proceeding to London about a quarter of an hour after sunrise, were horrified to perceive at the far horizon, the giant figure of a man in a black habit, and armed with a broadsword, towering into the sky. Like the spectre of the Brocken, this faded away; but to add to the bewilderment of Nibb and his companions, it was replaced by "about a hundred ships of several bigness and various shapes." Then rose a great hill covered with little villages, and before it spread a plain, on which rode thirty horsemen, armed with carbine and pistol.

The same document records that, on the 12th of the subsequent September, a naval engagement was seen in the air, near Porsnet, in Monmouthshire, between two fleets, one of which came from the northern quarter of the sky, the other from the south. A great ship fired first, "and after her, the rest discharged their vollies in order, so that great flashings of fire, and even smoak was visible, and noises in the ayr as of great guns." Then an army of phantoms engaged in "a square medow" near Porsnet, closing in with sword and pistol, and the cries of the wounded and dying were heard. On the 27th of December, Ottery, near Exeter, had a visitation of the same kind, when at five in the evening two armies fought in the air till six o'clock. "This was seen by a reverend minister and several others to their great amazement." On the 2nd of the same month, the people in Shropshire were, according to another sheet, sorely perplexed by the sudden appearance of two suns in the firmament, and it was duly remembered, that "such a sign was seen before the death of that tempestuous firebrand of Rome here in England, Thomas Beckett, Archbishop of Canterbury, and when Queen Mary began her bloody reign."

Then follow the death of the three lions in the Tower, and a vast enumeration of fiery darts, bullets, storms of hail, and floods, making up that which the writer hopes will prove "a word in season to a sinking kingdom."*

Nor were ghosts wanting at this time, of a political nature, too; for, in the same year, there was hawked in London an account of an apparition which appeared three several times to Elizabeth Freeman, thirty-one years of age, on each occasion delivering a message to his sacred majesty King Charles the Second. As certified before Sir Joseph Jorden, knight, and Richard Lee, D.D., rector of Hatfield, her story was as follows, and was, no doubt, a political trick:

On the night of the 24th of January, 1680, she was sitting at her mother's fireside, with a child on her knee, when a solemn voice behind her said, "Sweetheart!" and, on turning, she was startled to perceive a veiled woman all in white, whose face was concealed, and whose hand —a pale and ghastly one—rested on the back of her chair.

"The 15th day of May is appointed for the royal blood to be poisoned," said the figure. "Be not afraid, for I am only sent to tell thee," it added, and straightway vanished.

On Tuesday, the 25th of January, the same figure met her at the house door, and asked Elizabeth if she "remembered the message," but the woman, instead of replying, exclaimed: "In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, what art thou?" Upon this the figure assumed "a very glorious shape," and saying, "Tell King Charles, from me, not to remove his parliament, but stand to his council," vanished as before. Next evening the veiled figure appeared again, when Elizabeth was with her mother, who, on beholding her daughter's manifest terror, said: "Dost thou see anything?" She was then warned to retire, after which the spectre said, sternly: "Do your message." "I shall, if God enable me," replied Elizabeth. After this the spectre appeared but once again, and remained silent. "This was taken from the maid's own mouth by me, Richard Wilkinson, schoolmaster in the said town of Hatfield."*

* London: printed by Thomas Leach, Shoe-lane, 1664.

* London: Printed for J. B., Anno Domini 1680; and P. Brooksly, Golden Ball, near the Hospital Gate, 1681

In 1683, as a variety, London was treated to an account of a dreadful earthquake in Oxfordshire, where the houses were rocked like ships or cradles, while tables, stools, and chests "rowled to and fro with the violence of the Shog."*

The year 1687 brought "strange and wonderful news from Cornwall, being an account of a miraculous accident which happened near the town of Bodmyn, at a place called Park. Printed by J. Wallis, White Fryars Gate—next Fleet St.—near the Joyners Shop."

From this it would appear that on Sunday, the 8th of May, Jacob Mutton, whose relations were of good repute, and who was servant to William Hicks, rector of Cordinham (at a house he had near the old parish church of Eglashayle, called Park), heard, on going into his chamber about eight o'clock in the evening, a hollow voice cry, "So hoe! so hoe! so hoe!" This drew him to the window of the next room, from whence, to the terror of a lad who shared his bed, he disappeared, and could nowhere be found.

According to his own narrative, he had no sooner laid a hand upon an iron bar of the window, which was seventeen feet from the ground, than the whole grating fell into the yard below, all save the bar which he had grasped. This bar was discovered in his hand next morning, as he lay asleep in a narrow lane beyond the little town of Stratton, among the hills, thirty miles distant from Park. There he was wakened by the earliest goers to Stratton fair, who sent him home, sorely bewildered, by the way of Camelford. "On Tuesday he returned to his master's estate, without any hurt, but very melancholy, saying 'that a tall man bore him company all the journey, over hedges and brakes, yet without weariness.'" What became of this mysterious man he knew not, neither had he any memory of how the iron bar came to be in his hand. "To conclude, the young man who is the occasion of this wonderful relation, was never before this accident accounted any ways inclinable to sadness, but, on the contrary, was esteemed an airy, brisk, and honest young fellow."

But Mutton's adventure was a joke when compared with that of Mr. Jacob Seeley, of Exeter, as he related it to the judges on the western circuit, when, on the 22nd of September, 1690, he was beset by a veritable crowd of dreadful spectres. He took horse for Taunton, in Somersetshire, by the Hinton Cliff road, on which he had to pass a solitary place, known as the Black Down. Prior to this, he halted at a town called Cleston, where the coach and waggons usually tarried, and there he had some roast beef, with a tankard of beer and a noggin of brandy, in company with a stranger, who looked like a farmer, and who rode by his side for three miles, till they reached the Black Down, when he suddenly vanished into the earth or air, to the great perplexity of Mr. Jacob Seeley. This emotion was rather increased when he found himself surrounded by from one to two hundred spectres, attired as judges, magistrates, and peasantry, the latter armed with pikes; but, gathering courage, he hewed at them with his sword, though they threw over his head something like a fishing-net, in which they retained him from nine at night till four next morning. He thrust at the shadows with his rapier, but he felt nothing, till he saw one "was cut and had four of his fingers hanging by the skin," and then he found blood upon his sword. After this, ten spectre funerals passed; then two dead bodies were dragged near him by the hair of the head; and other horrors succeeded, till the spell broke at cock-crow.

It was now remembered that the house wherein Mr. Seeley had his beef, beer, and brandy had been kept by one of Monmouth's men (the spectre farmer, probably), who had been hung on his own sign-post, and the piece of ground where the net confined the traveller, was a place where many of the hapless duke's adherents had been executed and interred. Hence it was named the Black Down, according to the sheet before us, which was "Printed for T. M., London, 2nd Oct., 1690."

A sheet circulated at the close of the preceding year warns "all hypocrites and atheists to beware in time," as there had been a dreadful tempest of thunder and lightning in Hants, at Alton, where the atmosphere became so obscure that the electric flashes alone lighted the church during the service, in which two balls of fire passed through its eastern wall, another tore the steeple to pieces, broke the clock to shreds, and bore away the weathercock. The narrator adds, that all Friesland was under water, and that a flood in the Tiber had swept away a portion of the Castle of St. Angelo.

As another warning, London was visited, in 1689, by a tempest, which uprooted sixty-five trees in St. James's Park and Moorfields, blew down the vane of St. Michael's

* Printed for R. Baldwin, at the Old Bailey.

Church in Cornhill, and innumerable chimneys, and injured many well-built houses, and part of the Armourers' Hall in Coleman-street. Several persons were killed in Gravel-lane and Shoreditch; sixty empty boats were dashed to pieces against the bridge; three Gravesend barges full of people were cast away, and the Crown man-of-war was stranded at Woolwich.*

But the warning seems to have been in vain, for London, in 1692, was treated to an earthquake, which — as another sheet records — spread terror and astonishment about the Royal Exchange, all along Cornhill, in Lothbury, and elsewhere, on the 8th of September. All things on shelves were cast down, and furniture was tossed from wall to wall; the Spitalfields weavers had to seek shelter in flight, and all their looms were destroyed; these and other calamities were, it was alleged, "occasioned by the sins of the nation," and to avert such prodigies, the prayers of all good men were invoked.†

Two years later saw another marvel, when "the dumb maid of Wapping," Sarah Bowers, recovered her power of speech through the prayers of Messrs. Russel and Veil, "two pious divines," who exorcised and expelled the evil spirit which possessed her; and in 1696 the metropolis was treated to the "detection of a popish cheat" concerning two boys who conversed with the devil, though none seemed to doubt the Protestant miracle.

The close of the century 1700 saw "the dark and hellish powers of witchcraft exercised upon the Reverend Mr. Wood, minister of Bodmyn," on whom a spell was cast by a mysterious paper, or written document, which was given to him by a man and woman on horseback (the latter probably seated on a pillion), after which he became strangely disordered, and wandered about in fields, meadows, woods, and lonely places, drenched the while with copious perspirations; however, "the spell was ultimately found in his doublet, and on the burning thereof, Mr. Wood was perfectly restored," and wrote to his uncle an account of the affair, which appeared in a broadsheet published at Exeter, by Darker and Farley, 1700.

Rosemary-lane was the scene of another wonder, when a notorious witch was found in a garret there, and carried before Justice Bateman, in Well-close, on the 23rd July, 1704, and committed to Clerkenwell Prison. Her neighbour's children, through her alleged diabolical power, vomited pins, and were terrified by apparitions of enormous cats; by uttering one word she turned the entire contents of a large shop topsy-turvy. She was judicially tossed into the river from a ducking-stool, "but, like a bladder when put under water, she popped up again, for this witch swam like a cork." This was an indisputable sign of guilt; and in her rage or terror she smote a young man on the arm, where the mark of her hand remained "as black as coal;" he died soon after in agony, and was buried in St. Sepulchre's churchyard.* Of the woman's ultimate fate we know nothing.

In 1705, London was excited by a new affair: "The female ghost and wonderful discovery of an iron chest of money;" a rare example of the gullibility of people in the days of the good Queen Anne.

A certain Madam Maybel, who had several houses in Rosemary-lane, lost them by unlucky suits and unjust decrees of the law: for a time they were tenantless, and fell to decay and ruin. For several weeks, nay months past (continues the broadsheet), a strange apparition appeared nightly to a Mrs. Harvey and her sister, near relations of the late Madam Maybel, announcing that an iron chest filled with treasure lay in a certain part of one of the old houses in the lane. On their neglecting to heed the vision, the ghost became more importunate, and proceeded to threaten Mrs. Harvey, "that if she did not cause it to be digged up in a certain time (naming it) she should be torn to pieces." On this the terrified gentlewoman sought the council of a minister, who advised her to "demand in the name of the Holy Trinity how the said treasure should be disposed of."

Next night she questioned the spectre, and it replied:

"Fear nothing; but take the whole four thousand pounds into your own possession, and when you have paid twenty pounds of it to one Sarah Goodwin, of Tower-hill, the rest is your own; and be sure you dig it up on the night of Thursday, the 7th December!"

Accordingly men were set to work, and certainly a great iron chest "was found under an old wall in the very place which the spirit had described."

One of the diggers, John Fishpool, a private of the Guards, "has been under examination about it, and 'tis thought that the gentleman who owns the ground will claim the treasure as his right, and 'tis

* Printed for W. F., Bishopgate Without.
† J. Gerard, Cornhill, 1692.

* H. Hills in the Blackfriars, near the waterside.

thought there will be a suit of law commenced on it." Many persons crowded to see the hole from whence the chest had been exhumed in Rosemary-lane, and, by a date upon the lid, it would seem to have been made or concealed in the ninth year of the reign of Henry the Eighth.*

The dreadful effects of going to conjurers next occupied the mind of the public.

Mr. Rowland Rushway, a gentleman of good reputation, having lost money and plate to a considerable amount, Hester, his wife, took God to witness, "that if all the cunning men in London could tell, she should discover the thief, though it cost her ten pounds!"

With this view she repaired to the house of a judicial astrologer in Moorfields, about noon, when the day was one of great serenity and beauty. After some preliminary mummery or trickery, the wizard placed before her a large mirror, wherein she saw gradually appear certain indistinct things, which ultimately assumed "the full proportion of one man and two women."

"These are the persons who stole your property," said the astrologer; "do you know them?"

"No," she replied.

"Then," quoth he, "you will never have your goods again."

She paid him and retired, but had not gone three roods from the house when the air became darkened, the serene sky was suddenly overcast, and there swept through the streets a dreadful tempest of wind and rain, done, as she alleged, "by this cunning man, Satan's agent, with diabolical black art," forcing her to take shelter in an ale-house to escape its fury. "Many chairmen and market folks were all cognisant of this storm, which was confined to the vicinity of the ale-house, and a portion of the adjacent river, where many boats were cast away; and the skirt of it would seem to have visited Gray's-inn-walk, where three stately trees were uprooted!"

* London: printed for John Green, near the Exchange, 1705.

MISS PONSONBY'S COMPANION.

In Twelve Chapters.

CHAPTER I. THE NEW PATIENT.

"Delightful profession!" exclaimed Frank Tresham, the youngest medical man of Crampton, as his trap came slowly up the stiff hill leading to that pleasant Surrey country town. "Oh, charming profession," he muttered to himself bitterly, as he beat his great-coated breast with his chilled left hand. "A cold eight-mile drive, half the way up by-lanes knee-deep in mud, in reply to an express messenger from an old farmer in a fit, and when I get there I find the old brute well again, and gone to market. Net result of three hours' wear and tear: a wetting, loss of temper, and nought pounds, nought shillings, nought pence. Never mind, Frank, old boy! Dinner will be ready when you get back, and you've done your duty for to-day; so wake up, Beauty; now then, wake up, old girl! You seem as tired of the profession as I am. Come along old lady, we must make a splash into Crampton; it looks like business. 'Always drive fast, my boy,' old Colby of St. Thomas's used to say. Swish! Get along, Beauty, and show them how to do it."

It is a remarkable, even an extraordinary fact, yet nevertheless true, that the best-natured people are sometimes out of temper. On certain days, if a lion does not meet you full butt, a gnat is sure to appear; a buzzing, vexatious, and, what is worst of all, an almost invisible gnat. If a big tree does not fall across your path on that black morning, a perverse rose-leaf will crumple under your pillow, and after that for an hour or two (perhaps a day) everything, animate or inanimate, seems possessed with a demoniacal desire, ay, and power, to chafe, thwart, and torment you. An east wind, raw, harsh, unwholesome, begins to drive in your face. You are up late, a shirt-button springs maliciously off at the very moment the gong is thundering for breakfast; that letter with the expected remittance does not arrive, but the bill of that only too prompt upholsterer does. The beef at dinner is roasted to a rag. The servants are saucy or obstinate; you miss your express train, and arrive an hour too late for your special engagement in the City. Some cross star, in fact, rules your house of life, and as nothing will go right, and you are evidently bewitched, you eventually will, if you are a sensible person, throw up your arms, capitulate on any terms, take something comfortable, go to bed and sleep away the spell.

It was the beginning of an October evening, about half-past four o'clock, and the yellow leaves were sprinkling down slantways on Frank and his black mare, Beauty, as they rattled into Crampton. At the windows lights were here and there beginning to appear. The lamplighter,

swift Hesperus of Crampton, with the ladder on his nimble shoulder, as Tresham passed the Jolly Waggoners, ran down a side-street, kindling the lamps as he ran on his cheery occupation. That lamplighter, like the schoolmaster of the future, found darkness before him, but where he sped he sowed light, and blossoms of flame opened wherever he came.

But Frank Tresham was in no mood for poetical fancies. The east wind had got into his blood: that burden that occasionally galls the shoulders of most busy men, whether gentle or simple, was just then weighing heavily at his back. All he said to himself, as he switched Beauty rather unnecessarily, was: "What infernal, detestable gas! it gets worse and worse every day. As for the lamps, they're about as plentiful as plums in a school pudding. Old, humbugging, dead-alive place, I only wish I could get out of it with my pockets full, and catch me troubling it much afterwards. I flatter myself I could part from its chuckling tradesmen, its testy old majors, and sour, fidgety old maids, without breaking my heart in more than two or three pieces. But what's the matter with me to day? I know I feel confoundedly cross. I should just like to fight somebody. Why the deuce didn't I go to sea? Anything is better than this dog of a life."

Just by the post-office at the corner, old Purgeon, one of the two rival doctors of Crampton, drove complacently by, and nodded pityingly as he passed. Old Purgeon was prosperous, and there had been lately a good deal of low fever about. The people of Crampton, persistently refusing to drain, petted this same low fever, which had long since become chronic, and now they had grown rather proud of it. Old Purgeon fattened on the low fever, which was his best friend, and, under his auspices, the Crampton cemetery filled gradually, but surely. The local paper took good care not to talk much about this disagreeable subject, it being obnoxious to the ratepayers, who, although chiefly Tories, had in this instance conscientious objections to government interference. Purgeon's nod was at once patronising and compassionate.

"Stupid, chuckling, pompous old humbug, trading on his gold spectacles," said Tresham, half aloud. "Why does he dare to nod at me like that? He himself was a parish doctor once."

Poor Tresham! The smile of Venus herself that day would have seemed to him contemptuous. It is our temper that translates events into sweet or bitter. As he switched round into the main street, young Gumboge (the new doctor) rode by with the fury of an insane butcher-boy, whose master's best customer was dying rapidly of hunger in the next street. He waved his white-gloved hand half defiantly at Tresham, as much as to say:

"Here we are, telegraphed for by His Royal Highness the Duke of Mesopotamia, who will see no one but us, not even to save his life; so if it kills twenty horses, here we go again."

Gumboge had lately arrived at Crampton from a retired practice in the Old Kent-road, to take up the business of a clever but reckless uncle, who had drunk himself to death, after sinking to little better than a farrier and poor man's tooth-drawer.

"Won't do; won't wash, on any account, my fine fellow," thought Tresham. "You've got no patient at Big Bookham, and you know that very well. I can see what you'll do. You'll gallop straight off to the Blue Lion at Gypsom, and there spend the night at pool and unlimited loo with the jockeys and low sporting men. It is no matter; you won't be wanted at home, old boy, so don't, pray, hurry."

In this cynical, sarcastic, aggressive mood was Tresham, usually the merriest and frankest of hard-working, struggling young doctors, as he swept up to his own door at the end of High-street, Crampton, stuck his whip in its leather socket, drew off his thick right-hand glove, unbuttoned the apron, tossed back a gay-coloured Austrian railway rug, and leaped out in a cramped, stubborn kind of way. He then patted Beauty's flank more roughly than he was usually in the habit of doing—for he was a clever, good-hearted fellow, liked by all the people worth caring for in Crampton, though his practice was very much smaller than that of old Purgeon's—and gave a sharp whistle.

It was the usual signal for his gardener. No one came. Then he shouted "George!" violently up the archway at the right-hand side of the house.

"That fellow's drunk again," said Tresham, angrily. "I'll stand it no longer. Off he goes to-night, though I have to groom Beauty myself."

The young doctor was in no mood to stand nonsense. The second time he shouted, however, out from the stable there dashed a tall, gaunt, ill-made, red-haired fellow, very fiery in the face, and with a stubby broom in his hand. A little dog,

screaming and mad with excitement, raced before him after an enormous rat. In vain, however, George dabbed at the creature with the broom; in vain Dandy, the Scotch terrier, tried to pin the rat up against the gate-post. In an instant it doubled on man and dog, and precipitated itself into the entrance of a drain, the back way, in fact, to its foul fortress.

"Dash it, master," said George (or Garge, as he always called himself), "if there'll be any living here soon for these 'ere rats: this is the second to-day I've found in our corn-bin. Why the whole time I lived at Squire Troughton's, at Big Bookham, I never set my eyes on as many rats as I 'ave 'ere in this very last week as ever was."

Master was in no mood for talking. All he said was: "Set two more gins to-night; don't put it off; but don't lay down any poison. The neighbours' fowls and cats get hold of it, and that's not right. Now, mind what I say. Here, quick, take the trap round, and take care you polish the harness to-morrow better; it don't look well at all; and mind take up this check-strap a hole."

Mr. Tresham strode in at the back door, and through the little surgery, that smelt perennially of pills, and entered the kitchen, redolent just then of the agreeable odour of a roast pheasant, on whose plump breast delicious brown beads of froth rose and disappeared.

"To the moment, Lyddy, eh?" said the young bachelor, pulling out his watch, and comparing it with the kitchen clock, a brown-faced, solemn recorder of time; "but you look rather put out—what's the matter? Nothing gone wrong—where's little Lizzy?"

Lyddy, a faithful old servant, but somewhat of a tyrant from want of a feminine commander-in-chief, looked up in the most disconsolate way from some creamy bread-sauce she was making.

"It's really too bad," she said, "just as dinner is ready; but there, *I* would not go. *I* would not be put upon by every stuck-up body, and ordered and marshalled about. I call it shameful!"

"But who is it, what is it, Lyddy—patient—new patient?"

"Yes, sir; it is that old Miss Ponsonby, who lives up by the turning on the Brighton road, wants to see you directly. She is in such a temper, the servant says, because that young doctor, Gumboil, or whatever his name is, has not been there to-day, and has just sent wrong medicine."

"And who came? That demure, cat-like, canting maid of hers, who had a tooth drawn out once, and said a shilling was too much, she was so poor, and I let her off?"

"Yes, Master Frank, that's the woman. I don't like her. I told her we expected you in every moment. She might have seen dinner was just ready; but, there, do go in the parlour, and sit down, and I'll serve up dinner the moment you've washed your hands. Let them wait—that's what I say. Why did she not come to you long ago, and not go to that hare-brained scapegrace opposite, who does nothing but play billiards all day. Now do—now doee."

Lyddy was delightfully wheedling, but the sense of duty overcame even hunger and the temptation of the roast pheasant. With the air of the returning Regulus, a groan, and a shrug of the shoulders, Tresham drew on his gloves again, and violently buttoned his coat.

"Jolly, very jolly life!" he said, with a sardonic laugh. "I shan't be more than an hour, Lyddy," and then he repeated bitterly, half to himself, the lines:

> "Not often in our rough old island story
> The path to duty was the path to glory.

I never felt the curse upon our tribe till now. But it won't do, Lyddy, in these hard times to neglect a new patient. How shall I ever marry, you know, if I don't widen my practice? Come, draw me a glass of ale, and I'll be off."

"Ah, don't you throw yourself away on any of the stuck-up misses here" (Lyddy was never particularly charmed by the thought of a Mrs. Frank Tresham). "There's plenty of time for that, I always say."

Presently, somewhat grudgingly, and with a regretful eye at the pheasant, that shed fat tears at his departure, with vigorous step the young doctor tramped off up the street.

CHAPTER II. MISS PONSONBY'S COMPANION.

Frank Tresham could scarcely, under the circumstances, be said to enjoy his walk. Though generally a shrewd observer of the small incidents that variegate daily life, he was heedless now of anything but the one object for which he had sallied forth. The usual shops in the country town he passed with brusque indifference. The young footman gravely examining pipes at the last new tobacconist's, the row of pink and white sheep at the butcher's, the children ogling the glass bottles of sweets at the general shop, its proprietor, the old woman in the enormous frilled cap, like the tormented

farmer's wife in a pantomime, counting bulls'-eyes by the aid of a rushlight, had no interest for him just at that particular moment. Nor did he even stop a moment to look in at the great blaze of glorious orange light round the blacksmith's forge, but strode moodily on, Dandy, half conscious of something wrong, slinking at his heels.

What were the young doctor's thoughts? Well, they turned naturally enough on his new patient. All he knew of her as yet was that she was a rich, miserly, ailing old maid, who seldom went out, except to an occasional tea-party or schoolroom lecture. That servant of hers, smooth, hypocritical, and false, was his abomination. Then she had a companion, whom he had never to his knowledge seen, probably one of the usual fawning, obsequious parasites that hang about such old ladies in hopes of a legacy. There was a niece, too, whom he had once seen walking by her bath-chair, a pretty, intelligent, lady-like girl. The nieces of old cats generally are pretty, he reflected. She had golden hair, too, at least what poets call golden hair, for they are easily pleased. Pity girls like that, he thought, could not coin their golden hair into a dowry. Bitter again was Frank Tresham; in that mood Cytherea herself could not have allured him, unless in her lily-white right hand she had held up a chinking bag; fie on him and all this temper because an old farmer had not been as ill as he thought he was, and because a new patient had called him away from a well-earned dinner. All very unworthy you see of a well-balanced mind; but then even well-balanced minds have been known to sometimes momentarily break down, under certain conditions.

Miss Ponsonby's house lay back a little way from the street; and two or three cracked stone steps, guarded by two fine crisp-leaved bay-trees, led to a small paved terrace, which ran beneath the parlour windows. These windows, set deep in old-fashioned frames, which were painted a gloomy black, adding to the naturally gloomy and prison effect of the whole habitation, and assisted in reducing the visitor's mind to a fitting mood for an audience with the somewhat exacting and fidgety owner. Over the door, which boasted a triangular pediment, with a little notched cornice of a style popular some fifty years ago, grew a magnificent Virginia creeper, already in the fullest blood-red crimson of its final autumnal splendour. Even by the dim light of a sickly, chilly young moon, that southern exile glowed with the hectic colours that foretold its speedy death.

No one answered the bell that Mr. Tresham rang sharply, and as he stood somewhat impatiently on the door-step, two tall elms, spinster sisters, that overhung one side of the house, cast down on him three or four monitory dead leaves, as much as to say, "We are both very cold and miserable up here; come now, you man down there, be miserable too, for your merry spring-time will soon be gone as ours has long since gone."

Not liking to ring again, the more especially as he saw only one light at the upper windows, and that a dim melancholy immovable one behind a blind, on which no passing shadows were cast, Tresham stepped back from the door, and looked in at the parlour window to see if any servant was visible.

There was no candle in the room, but it was crimsoned by the flickering fire-light which gleamed on the picture-frames and ceiling, and on a bust which stood on a side bookcase. By the fire, not exactly facing the window, nor yet quite in profile, in an old carved high-back chair, sat a graceful girl of about twenty, dressed in black, who, with a face full of saddened thoughts, held an open letter in her hand. She looked so very graceful and lovable, and, set in the black window-frame, formed altogether so pretty a picture of girlish thoughtfulness, that Mr. Tresham stood there some minutes without ringing again. It was the pretty niece he had admired before, and of whose impecuniosity he had thought so sarcastically.

At that moment the door opened, and the cat-like face of Mercy, Miss Ponsonby's maid, appeared. Mr. Tresham asked how Miss Ponsonby was. He could hear some one coughing up-stairs as he spoke.

"Will you please walk into the parlour, sir," said the odious Mercy. "There is only Miss Dampier there" (there was a contemptuous emphasis on the word *only* that annoyed Tresham, though he scarcely knew why), "and I'll go up and tell missus. She *would* get up this afternoon, do all we could. These trials are sent for our good, sir. Yes, sir; I know that; but still they are trials. Walk in here, sir, please; it is only Miss Dampier."

A delicious odour of Russian violets met him as the parlour door opened, and the young doctor entered, hat in hand, apologising for the intrusion to a young lady, who rose and bowed when she heard his name.

"I would ring for candles," she said, rising, "but I am afraid our little Susan has gone into the town for some arrow-root, and I must not detain Mercy."

"If you do not dislike this twilight," said Tresham, in his frank, pleasant way—his temper was all sunshine again now—"I delight in it."

"I am afraid, Mr. Tresham," she said, after a few words had passed, "that you will find my dear aunt very ill. She has got very weak lately, and her cough and loss of appetite distress us very much. Aunt, you will find, is very strong-willed, and will not nurse as much as she ought; and as for keeping her in bed, even that servant, who has been with her thirteen years, owns it is impossible. Dear aunt! it makes me very sad."

"Have you been stopping long with Miss Ponsonby, may I ask?"

"About four or five months. Oh, she is so kind when she is well and in good spirits."

"I only remember to have seen you once in Crampton."

"No; I hardly ever go out. Aunt does not like being left alone."

"Your name is not the same as your aunt's. I suppose she is your aunt only by marriage?"

"Yes; she is my father's eldest brother's wife's youngest sister. Oh, that is a very stupid way of explaining it to you. No; she is not really my aunt, but my cousin; but I call her aunt because I love her so much, and she is so kind in having me to be with her."

Tresham laughed pleasantly at this genealogical explanation, and the two were soon plunged into pleasant conversation, which was broken by a scratching at the front door.

"That's not a ghost, but my dog Dandy," he said, "and there he must remain."

"Oh no, do let him in, Mr. Tresham," said Miss Dampier. "I am so fond of dogs. Aunt won't have any pets. Oh, I'll take care he does not come up-stairs, or bark, or disturb aunt one little bit."

Tresham soon relented; on his parole of honour Dandy was admitted, and soon became the sworn vassal of his fair guardian.

"I can't think what Mercy is doing," said Miss Dampier, "but dear aunt has such funny ways, and she no doubt is having all the papers she was looking over last night carefully put away, before she admits you into her sanctum. Even I may not go there, you must know, Mr. Tresham, when she is absent. She is quite a despot in little matters, but these peculiarities do not disturb me at all."

Tresham was just then thinking what a sweet voice Miss Dampier had, and wondering what colour her eyes were, when Mercy appeared with a light.

"My missus will see you now, sir," Mercy said, leading the way. "Ah, sir, these trials is good for us; missus is always impatient when she gets counting over the perishable riches."

There was something repulsive about the ostentatious self-mortification of Mercy, and Tresham pushed it roughly aside. He turned on the first landing and spoke sharply.

"Did Mr. Gumboge prescribe any form of cough mixture?"

"Yes, sir, some dark stuff, sweet, and with laudanum, I think, in it; it gave missus sleep; but last night he sent something for the measles by mistake; then when we returned it to-day he sent a blister that was meant for the man at the turnpike, and he hasn't been since. I fear he's a very worldly, wild young man."

"I don't know about his worldliness, whatever that means, in your phraseology," said Mr. Tresham, smiling, "but I must confess the mistake was rather too bad, and I can't regret——"

But that sentence of reprobation was never finished, for at that instant Miss Ponsonby's bedroom door flew open, and an old lady tottered forth in a white dressing-gown, haggard, pale, and excited. She wrung her hands wildly:

"Mercy," she cried, or rather screamed, "some one has been at my desk while I've been asleep. Where's that Susan's mother, it must be her. Where's Susan—call Lilly, call Miss Dampier. There have been thieves in the house. Who's that? Is that Mr. Tresham? He must wait. Excuse my agitation. You must wait, sir—the doctor? I've been robbed. Thieves! Thieves! I've been robbed of a ten-pound note."

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THE ROSE AND THE KEY.

CHAPTER VIII. WYBOURNE CHURCHYARD.

In a golden mist he lost her; but he does not despair. Mr. Marston pursues. Has he any very clear idea why?

If he had overtaken the ladies, as he expected, at Llanberris, would he have ventured, of his own mere notion, to accompany them on their after-journey? Certainly not. What, then, is the meaning of this pursuit? What does he mean to do or say?

He has no plan. He has no set speech or clear idea to deliver. He is in a state of utter confusion. He only knows that see her once more he must—that he can't endure the thought of letting her go, thus, for ever from his sight; she is never for a moment out of his head.

I don't know what his grave and experienced servant thought of their mysterious whirl to Chester by the night mail. He did not refer it, I dare say, to anything very wise or good. But the relation of man and master is, happily, military, and the servant's conscience is acquitted when he has obeyed his orders.

The fog has melted into clearest air, and the beautiful moon is shining.

What a world of romance, and love, and beauty he thinks it, as he looks out of the open window on the trees and mountains that sail by in that fairy light.

The distance is shortening. Everything near and far is good of its kind. Everything is interesting. It is like the ecstasy of the opium-eater. Never were such stars, and hedges, and ditches. What an exquisite little church, and tombstones! Requiescat in pace! What a beautiful ash-tree! Heaven bless it! How picturesque that horse's head, poking out through the hole in the wall with the ivy on it! And those pigs, lying flat on the manure-heap, jolly, odd creatures! How delightfully funny they are! And even when he draws his head in, and leans back for a moment in his place, he thinks there is something so kindly and jolly about that fat old fellow with the travelling-cap and the rugs, who snores with his chin on his chest — a stock-broker, perhaps. What heads and ledgers! — wonderful fellows! The valves and channels through which flows into its myriad receptacles the incredible and restless wealth of Britain. Or, perhaps, a merchant, princely, benevolent. Well that we have such a body, the glory of England.

The fat gentleman utters a snort, wakes up, looks at his watch, and produces a tin sandwich-box.

That thin elderly lady in black, that sits at the left of the fat gentleman, who is champing his sandwiches, does not see things, with her sunken eyes, as Mr. Marston sees them. She is gliding on to her only darling at school, who lies in the sick-house in scarlatina.

They are now but half an hour from Chester. Mr. Marston is again looking out of the window as they draw near.

"Maud Guendoline," he is repeating again. "Guendoline — an odd surname, but so beautiful. Foreign, is it? I never heard it before. When we get into Chester I'll have the Army List, and the London Directory, and every list of names they can make me out. It may help me. Who knows?"

They are in Chester. Oh, that it were not so big a place! His servant is looking after his luggage. He is in the ticket-office, making futile inquiries after "an

old lady, Miss Max, who left Bangor for Chester that very evening, and forgot something of importance, and I would gladly pay any one a reward who could give me a clue to find her by. I am sure only that she was to go viâ Chester."

No; they could tell him nothing. But if it was viâ Chester, she was going on by one of the branches. The clerk who might have written the new labels for her luggage was not on duty till to-morrow afternoon, having leave till two. "He's very sharp; if 'twas he did it—Max is a queer name—he'll be like to remember it; that is, he may."

Here was hope, but hope deferred. The people at Llanberris had told him that the label which he had picked up was the only one on which the name of the place was written, on which account it was removed, and all the rest were addressed simply "Chester." He has nothing for it but patience.

There is a pretty little town called Wybourne, not very far from a hundred miles away. Next evening, the church-bell, ringing the rustics to evening service, has sounded its sweet note over the chimneys of the town, through hedge-rows and bosky hollows, over slope and level, and Mr. Marston, with the gritty dust of the railway still on his hat, has tapped in the High-street at the post-office wooden window-pane, and converses with grave and plaintive Mrs. Fisher.

"Can you tell me if a lady named Miss Guendoline lives anywhere near this?" he inquires.

"Guendoline? No, sir. But there's Mr. and Mrs. Gwyn, please, that lives down the street near the Good Woman."

"No, thanks; that's not it. Miss Maud Guendoline."

Mrs. Fisher put an unheard question to an invisible interlocutor in the interior, and made answer: "No, sir; please there's no such person."

"I beg pardon; but just one word more. Does a lady named Max—a Miss Max—live anywhere near this place?"

"Miss Max? I think not, sir."

"You're not quite sure, I think?" says he, brightening, as he leans on the little shelf outside the window; and if his head would have fitted through the open pane, he would, I think, in his eagerness, have popped it into Mrs. Fisher's front parlour.

Again Mrs. Fisher consulted the inaudible oracle.

"No, sir; we don't receive no letters here for no person of that name," she replied.

The disappointment in the young man's handsome face touched Mrs. Fisher's gentle heart.

"I'm very sorry, indeed, sir. I wish very much we could a' gave you any information," she says, through the official aperture.

"Thank you very much," he answers, desolately. "Is there any other post-office near? Do the people send a good way to you—about what distance round?"

"Well, the furthest, I think, will be Mr. Wyke's, of Wykhampton, about four miles."

"Is there any name at all like Max, Miss Max, an old lady? I should be so extremely—I can't tell you—so very grateful." He pleads, in his extremity, "Do, do, pray ask."

She turned and consulted the unknown once more.

"There is no one—that is, no surname—here, sir, at all like Max. There's an old lady lives near here, but it can't be her. She's Miss Maximilla Medwyn."

"Maximilla? Is she an old lady?"

"Yes sir."

"Thin?"

"She is, sir." And Mrs. Fisher begins to wonder at the ardour of his inquiries, and to look at him very curiously.

"Has she been from home lately?"

"I think she was." (Here she again consults her unseen adviser.) "Yes, sir; she returned only last night."

"And where does she live, pray? In the town here—near this?" he pursues.

"In the Hermitage, please, sir; any one you meet will show it you. It is just at the end of the town. But she'll be in church at present."

"And how soon do you think it will be over—how soon will the people be coming out?"

"In about half an hour, sir."

And so, with many acknowledgments on his part, and no little surprise and conjecture on that of sedate Mrs. Fisher, who wondered what could have fired this young gentleman so about old Miss Medwyn, the conference ends, and in ten minutes more, in a somewhat less dusty state, he presents himself at the open gate of the churchyard, and reconnoitres.

Over the graves in faint gusts peals the muffled swell of the organ, and the sound of voices, sweetly and sadly, like psalmody from another world. He looks up to the gilded hand of the clock in the ivied tower, and conjectures that this must be the holy

song that precedes the sermon. Devoutly he wishes the pulpit orator a quick deliverance.

He, on the whole, wisely resolves against going into the church, and, being provided with a seat, perhaps in some corner of difficult egress, whence, if he should see the objects of his pursuit, he might not be able to make his way out in time without a fuss.

At length, with a flutter at his heart, he sees the hats and bonnets begin to emerge from the porch. Taking his stand beside the gate, he watches. Not a single Christian in female garb escapes him. He sees the whole congregation pour itself out, and waits till the very dregs and sediment drop forth. Those who pray, in formâ pauperis, and draw a weekly dividend out of the poors' box: old Mrs. Milders, with the enormous black straw bonnet, and the shaking head and hand; Bill Hopkins, lame of a leg, who skips slowly down on a crutch; and Tom Buzzard, blind of both eyes, a pock-marked object of benevolence, with his chin high in the air, and a long cudgel in his hand, with which he taps the curbstone, and now and then the leg of a passenger who walks the street forgetful of the blind.

The clerk comes forth demurely with a black bag, such as lawyers carry their briefs in. There is no good, Mr. Marston thinks, in waiting for the sexton.

He joins the clerk, compliments him on his church and organ, asks whether Miss Maximilla Medwyn was in church—(yes, she was)—and where the house called the Hermitage is to be found.

"You may go by the road, sir," said the clerk, "or by the path, which you'll find it shorter. Take the first stile to your right, when you turn the corner."

Alas! what is the meaning of this walk to the Hermitage? Miss Medwyn was in church; and could he not swear that, in the review just ended, he had seen distinctly every female face and figure in the congregation as it "marched past?" His Miss Max was assuredly not among them; and she and Miss Medwyn, therefore, were utterly distinct old women—ah, well-a-day!

He crosses the stile. The path traverses a narrow strip of meadow, the air is odorous with little dishevelled cocks of hay, mown only the day before; the spot cloistered in by very old and high hawthorn hedges, is silent with a monastic melancholy.

He sighs more pleasantly as he enters this fragrant solitude; beyond the stile at the other side, is the gloom of tall old trees. He is leaving the world behind him.

Butterflies are hovering up and down, along the hedge, at the sunny side of the field. A bee booms by as he stands on the second stile; it is the only sound he hears except the faint chirp of the grasshopper. He descends upon that pleasant dark-green grass that grows in shade.

Here is another field, long and narrow, silent and more gloomy than the first. Up the steep, a giant double row of lime-trees stretches, marking the line of the avenue, now carpeted over with thick grass, of the old manor-house of Wybourne, some walls and stone-shafted windows of which, laden with ivy, and canopied by ancient trees, crown the summit. The western sun throws long dim shadows down the slope. A thick underwood straggles among the trunks of the lordly timber, and here and there a gap leaves space, in which these patriarchal trees shake their branches free, and spread a wider shadow.

In this conventual obscurity, scarcely fifty steps up the gentle slope, he sees Miss Maud, Maud Guendoline, or whatever else her name may be, standing in her homely dress. She is looking toward him, no doubt recognises him, although she makes no sign. His heart thumps wildly once or twice. He is all right again in a moment. He quickens his pace. He is near enough to see her features distinctly. She looks a little grave, he thinks, as he raises his hat.

Here is a tall fellow, great in a town-and-gown row, full of pluck, cool as marble in danger, very much unnerved at this moment, and awfully afraid of this beautiful and slender girl.

CHAPTER IX. THE YOUNG LADY SPEAKS.

"I'm so glad, I'm so charmed—how extremely lucky I am! I had not the least hope of this. And you have made your journey quite safely?"

As he makes this little confession and inquiry, his brown handsome face and large eyes are radiant with happiness.

"Safely! oh, yes, my cousin and I are old travellers, and we never lose our way or our luggage. I am waiting here for her; she is paying a visit to—I really forget his name, farmer something or other, an old friend of hers, down there; you can see the smoke of his chimney over the hedge,"

said the young lady, indicating the direction.

"And you're not fatigued?"

"Oh, no! thanks."

"And Miss Max quite well, I hope?" he adds, recollecting her right to an inquiry.

"Miss Max is very well, thanks," said the young lady.

Had she blushed when she saw him? Was there not a gentle subsidence in the brilliant tint with which she met him? He thought her looking more beautiful than ever.

"I dare say you are glad to find yourself at home again?" says he, not knowing what exactly to say next.

She glanced at him as if she suspected a purpose in his question.

"Some people have no place they can call a home, and some who have are not glad to find themselves there. I'm not at home, and I'm not sorry," she said, ever so little bitterly.

"There is a great deal of melancholy in that," he said, in a lower tone, as if he would have been very glad to be permitted to sympathise. "Away from home, and yet no wish to return. Isn't it a little cruel, too?"

"Melancholy or cruel, it happily concerns no one but myself," she said, a little haughtily.

"Everything that can possibly concern your happiness concerns me," said the young man, audaciously.

She looked for a moment offended and even angry, but "a change came o'er the spirit of her dream," and she smiled as if a little amused.

"You seem, Mr. Marston, to give away your sympathy on very easy terms—you must have mistaken what I said. It was no confidence. It was spoken, as people in masks tell their secrets, and further because I don't care if all the world knew it. How can you tell that I either desire or deserve pity; yours, or any other person's? You know absolutely nothing of me."

"I'm too impetuous; it is one of my many faults. Other fellows, wiser men, get on a thousand times better, and I have laid myself open to your reproof, and—and—disdain, by my presumption, by my daring to speak exactly as I feel. It is partly this, that the last three days—they say that happy days seem very short—I don't know how it is, I suppose I'm different from every one else; but this day, yesterday, and today, seem to me like three weeks; I feel as if I had known you ever so long—— "

"And yet you know nothing about me, not even my name," said the young lady, smiling on the grass near her pretty foot, and poking at a daisy with the tip of her parasol, and making its little head nod this way and that.

"I do know your name—I beg pardon, but I do; I heard Miss Max call you Maud, and I learned quite accidentally your second name yesterday."

Miss Maud looks at him from under her dark lashes suddenly. Her smile has vanished now; she looks down again; and now it returns darkly.

"I do upon my honour, I learned it at Llanberris yesterday," he repeated.

"Oh! then you *did* go to Llanberris; and you did not disdain to cross-examine the people about us, and to try to make out that which you supposed we did not wish to disclose?"

"You are very severe," he began, a good deal abashed.

"I'm very merciful, on the contrary," she said bitterly; "if I were not—but no matter. I think I can conjecture who was your informant. You made the acquaintance of a person blind of one eye, who is a detective, or a spy, or a villain of some sort, and you pumped him. Somehow, I did not think before that a gentleman was quite capable of that sort of thing."

"But, I give you my honour, I did nothing of the kind." He pleads earnestly. "I saw no such person, I do assure you."

"You shall answer my questions, then," she said as imperiously as a spoiled child; "and, first, will you speak candidly? Will you be upon honour, in no one particular, wilfully to deceive me?"

"You are the last person on earth I should deceive, upon any subject, Miss Guendoline—I hope you believe me."

"Well, why did you go to Llanberris?"

"I had hopes," he answered with a little embarrassment, "of overtaking you and Miss Max—and I—I hoped, also, that perhaps you would permit me to join in your walk—that was my only reason."

"Now, tell me my name?" said the young lady, suddenly changing her line of examination.

"Your name is, I believe—I think, you are, Miss Maud Guendoline," he answered.

She smiled again darkly at the daisy she was busy tapping on the head.

"Miss Maud Guendoline," she repeated very low; and she laughed a little to herself.

"Maud and Guendoline are two chris-

tian names," she said. "Do you really believe that I have no surname; or perhaps you believe that either of these is my surname? I need not have told you, but I do, that neither of these is the least like it. And now, why have you come here? Have you any real business here?"

"You are a very cruel inquisitor," he says, with a very real wince. "Is there any place where an idle man may *not* find himself, without well knowing why? Is your question quite fair?"

"Is your answer quite frank? Do you quite remember your promise? If we are not to part this moment, you must answer without evasion."

This young lady, in serge, spoke as haughtily as if she were a princess in a fairy-tale.

"Well, as you command me, I will, I will, indeed. I—I believe I came here, very much—entirely, indeed, from the same motive that led me to Llanberris. I could not help it, I couldn't, upon my honour! I hope you are not very angry."

It is not usual to be constrained to speak, in matters of this kind, the literal truth; and I question if the young man was ever so much embarrassed in all his days.

"Mr. Marston," she said, very quietly, he fancied a little sadly, "you are, I happen to know, a person of some rank, and likely to succeed to estates, and a title—don't answer, I *know* this to be so, and I mention it only by way of preface. Now, suppose I pull off my glove, and show you a seamstress's finger, dotted all over with the needle's point; suppose I fill in what I call my holiday by hard work with my pencil and colour-box; suppose, beside all this, I have troubles enough to break the spirits of the three merriest people you know; and suppose that I have reasons for preventing any one, but Miss Max, from knowing where I am, or suspecting who I am, don't you think there is enough in my case to make you a little ashamed of having pried and followed as you are doing?"

"You wrong me—oh, *indeed*, you wrong me! You won't say that; I did, perhaps, wrong. I may have been impertinent; but the meanness of prying, you *won't* think it! All I wanted was to learn where you had gone: my crime is in following you. I did not intend that you should think I had followed. I hoped it might appear like accident. If you knew how I dread your contempt, and how I respect you, and how your reproof pains me, I am sure you would think differently, and forgive me."

I don't think there could have been more deference in his face and tones if he had been pleading before an empress.

The young lady's dark eyes for a moment looked full at him, and again down upon the little daisy at her foot; and she drew some odd little circles round it as she looked, and I think there was ever so slight a brightening of her colour while the end of her parasol made these tiny diagrams.

If a girl be only beautiful enough, and her beauty of the refined type, it is totally impossible, be her position, her dress, her associates what they may, to connect the idea of vulgarity with her. There is nothing she does or means that is not elegant. Be she what she may, and you the most conceited dog on earth, there is a superiority in her of which your inward nature is conscious, and if you see her winnowing barley, as honest Don Quixote said of his mistress, the grains are undoubtedly pearls.

Mr. Marston, in the influence of this beauty, was growing more and more wild and maudlin every moment.

"The world's all wrong," he said, vehemently; "it is always the best and the noblest that suffer most; and you say you have troubles, and you don't disdain to work, and are not ashamed of it; and I admired and respected you before, and I've learned to honour you to-day. You talk of rank: of course, there are things in its favour—some things; but there are ever so many more against it. I have little to boast even of that, and I never was so happy as when I knew nothing about it. People are always happy, I am sure, in proportion as the idea of it fades from their minds. There is but one thing worth living for—and, oh, Heaven, how I wish I were worthy of you!"

"Now, Mr. Marston, you are talking like a madman. There must be no more of that," she said, in earnest.

"I spoke the truth, straight from my heart. I believe that is always madness."

"I like truth pretty well. I speak it more boldly than most girls, I believe. But I quite agree with you, whenever one is noble one is inevitably foolish. I'm not very old, but I have heard a good deal of romantic talk in my time, as every girl does, and I despise it. It doesn't even embarrass me. If we are to talk till my cousin, Miss Max, comes back, do let it be reasonably; I shall tire of it instantly on any other terms."

"When you told me to speak truth, just

now, you did not think so," says he, a little bitterly.

"Why can't you speak to me, for a few minutes, as you would to a friend? You talked just now about rank as if it should count for nothing. I don't agree with you. It is no illusion, but a cruelly hard fact. If I were the sort of girl who could like any one—I mean, make a fool of myself and fall in love—that person must be exactly of my own rank, neither above nor below it. The man who stoops is always sorry for it too late; and if he is like me, he would always think he was chosen, not for himself, but for his wealth or his title. Now, if *I* suspected that, it would make my house a jail, every hour of my life ghastly, my very self odious to me. It would make me utterly wicked; bad enough to be jealous of a human rival, though death may remove that. But to be jealous of your own circumstances, to know that you were nothing in the heart of your beloved, and they everything; that they had duped you; that your wooing was an imposture, and your partner a phantom. That anything like that should be my lot, Heaven forbid! It never shall. But were I a man, and found it so, I should load a pistol, and lie, soon enough, in my last straight bed."

"Only think how cruel and impossible this is," he said, gently, looking into her face. "I ask you to be reasonable, and consider the consequences of your pitiless theory. As to wealth, isn't there always some inequality—and do you mean that an artificial social distinction should throw asunder for ever two people——"

"I mean to say this—I ought to beg your pardon for interrupting you, but I speak for myself—if I were a man, I could never trust the love of the woman who, being immensely poorer than I, and in an inferior place in life, consented to marry me. I never could; and the more I loved her the worse it would be."

"We are all lawgivers and law-breakers," says he.

"I'm not, for one; I observe, at least, my own precepts; and so resolved, I shall never either love or marry."

He looked at her sadly; he looked down. Even this was more tolerable than if she had said she could neither love nor marry *him*.

"I wish, God knows, that *I* could rule my heart so," he said, sadly.

"Every one who pleases can. There are good nuns and good monks. It is a matter of will and of situation. Man or girl, it is all the same; if they know they can't marry, and have a particle of reason, they see that liking and loving, except in the way of common goodwill, is not for them. They resist that demon Asmodeus, or Cupid, or call him how you please, and he troubles them no more."

"How can you talk so cruelly?" he says.

There is pain in every line of his handsome face, in the vexed light of the eyes that gaze so piercingly on her, in the uneasy grasp of his hand that leans upon the rough bark of the great tree which her shoulder touches lightly.

CHAPTER X. FAREWELL.

As men who, in stories, have fallen in love with phantoms, Marston feels, alas! he is now in love with a beautiful image of apathy. Is the great gulf really between them, and he yearning for the impossible?

"If by any sacrifice I could ever make myself the least worthy of you; if you could even like me ever so little——"

She laughed, but not unkindly.

"If I liked you, or were at all near liking you, you should know it by a certain sign," she says, with a smile, though a sad one.

"How? Do tell me how—how I should know it?" And he works off a great piece of the old bark with his sinewy hand as he talks.

"By my instantly leaving you," she answered. "And now we have talked sufficiently, haven't we, on this interesting theme? One day or other you'll say, if, by chance, you remember this talk under the ruins of Wybourne, 'That wise but threadbare young lady was right, and I was wrong, and it is very well there was some prudent person near to save me from an irreparable folly;' and having made this prediction, and said my say on what seems to me a very simple question, the subject is, for me, exhausted, and becomes a bore, and nothing shall tempt me to say or listen to another word upon it. What a sudden curious fog there was yesterday evening!"

Mr. Marston talked of the fog, as well as he was able, and of the old city of Chester, and whatever else this young lady pleased; he was hardly half thinking of these themes. His mind was employed, in an undercurrent, upon far more interesting matter.

"Suffering," he thinks, "is the parent of

all that is fine in character. This girl thinks, resolves, and acts for herself. How different she is from the youthful daughters of luxury! What originality—what energy—what self-reliance!"

Perhaps he is right. This young lady has a will of her own; she is a little eccentric; she thinks, without much knowledge of the world, very resolutely for herself. I don't know that she is more jealous than other women. But she is an imperious little princess.

While she is trifling in this cruel way, Miss Max comes through a little gate in the hedge at the foot of this sloping field. Urged apparently by the shortness of the time that remained, the young gentleman made one other venture.

"And do you mean to say, Miss Maud, that you, for instance, could never love a man whose rank you thought above your own?"

This was a rather abrupt transition from Carl Maria von Weber, about whose music the young lady was talking.

"You don't keep treaties, it seems," said the young lady; "but as only two or three minutes remain, and we may never meet again, I'll answer you. Yes, perhaps I could. All the more readily for his superiority, all the more deeply for his sacrifices. But in some of my moods, vain or ambitious, I might marry him without caring a pin about him. There are the two cases, and I am never likely to be tempted by either, and—pray, let me say the rest—if I were, no one should ever suspect it, and I should, assuredly, accept neither."

"You said we were never likely to meet again," said the young man. "Is that kind? What have I done to deserve so much severity?"

He glanced down the slope. Miss Max was toiling up. She was stumbling over the twisted roots that spread under the great trees, and seeing a man conversing with her young cousin, she had put up her parasol to keep the slanting sunlight from her eyes, and aid her curious scrutiny.

She could not reach them well in less than four minutes more.

Four minutes still. Precious interval.

"You go to the ball at Wymering?" she asked in a tone that had something odd in it; a strange little sigh, and yet how much apathy.

"Anywhere—yes, certainly," he replies, in hot haste. "Is there a chance—the least hope?"

He remembered that she was not a very likely person to figure at a ball, and so he ended, "I have often intended going there; any hope of your being in the neighbourhood of Wymering about that time?"

"You see, I don't pretend to be a great person. No fairy has bedizened me for an occasion. I have no magnificence to dissolve at a fated hour," she said, with a sad little laugh. "Those balls are not such ill-natured things after all. They help poor girls who work at their needles. Yes, I always go to that, at least as far as the cloak-room."

"Wherever you go, Miss Maud, there will be no one like you; no one like you, anywhere, in all the world; and remember—though you can't like me now—how I adore you."

"Stop—don't talk so to me," she replied. "You are rich. I am, what I am; and language that might be only audacious if we were equals, is insult now."

"Good Heavens! won't you understand me? I only meant, I can't help saying it, that I care to win no one else on earth, and never shall. If you but knew——"

"What need I know more than I do? I believe, rather from your looks than from your words, that you talk your folly in good faith. But I have heard too much of that, for one day. One thing more I have to say, you must leave this immediately; and, if from Miss Max, or any other person, you try to make out anything more, ever so little, about me, about my story, name, business, than I have told you, you never speak to me one word more. That's understood. Here now is my cousin."

Miss Max, smiling pleasantly, said:

"Dear me, Mr. Marston, who could have fancied that you would have been here! I could not think who it could be, as I came up the hill. Were you at Wybourne Church?"

"Oh, no! I wai——" He was going to say, "waited outside," but he corrected himself. "I arrived too late. A pretty little church it seems to be."

"Oh! quite a beautiful little church, inside. Some one showed you the path here, I suppose; those up there are the ruins of old Wybourne Hall: what an awful fog we had last night! Do you know, it was really quite frightful going through it at the fearful speed we did. You must come and drink tea with us, Mr. Marston."

"No, dear, we must not have any one to tea to-night; I have particular reasons,

and besides, Mr. Marston has to leave this immediately," said Miss Maud, inhospitably.

He looked at her ruefully.

"You told me you were going immediately?" said the young lady, gently, but with a slight emphasis.

"But I dare say you can manage to put it off for an hour or so, Mr. Marston—can't you?" asked Miss Max.

He glanced at the inexorable Miss Maud, and he read his doom in that pretty face.

"I'm afraid—it is so very kind of you—but I'm really afraid it is quite impossible," he answers.

"I don't like to bore you, Mr. Marston; but if you *can* stay to tea, just an hour or two—can't you manage that? I shall be *so* glad," urged the old lady.

"Mr. Marston, I believe, made a promise to be at another place this evening," said the girl; "and Mr. Marston says he prides himself on keeping his word."

Though she was looking down at the grass, and said this with something like a smile, and in a careless way, Mr. Marston dares not disobey the reminder it conveys.

"That is perfectly true, what Miss Maud says. I made that promise to a person whom I dare not disappoint, whom I respect more than I can describe," and he added in a low tone to Maud, "whom it is my pride to obey."

"Good-bye, Mr. Marston," she says, with a smile, extending her pretty hand very frankly.

How he felt as he touched it!

"Good-bye, Miss Max," he says, turning with a sigh and a smile to that lady.

"Good-bye, since so it must be, and I hope we may chance to meet again, Mr. Marston," said the old lady, kindly giving him her thin old hand.

"So do I—so do I—thank you, very much," says he, and he pauses, looking as if he was not sure that he had not something more to say.

"Good-bye, Miss Max," he repeats, "and good-bye," he says again to the girl, extending his hand.

Once more, for a second or two, he holds her hand in his, and then he finds himself walking quickly under the straggling hawthorns. The sprays are rattling on his hat as he crosses the stile. He is striding through the first narrow field over which his walk from the church had been. Lifeless and dimmed the hedges are, and the songs of the birds all round are but a noise which he scarcely hears. There is but one thought in his brain and heart, as he strides through this cloistered solitude, as swiftly as if his rate of travel could shorten the time between this and the ball at Wymering.

This Mr. Marston was not so much a fool as not to know that, being a man of honour, he had taken a very serious step. The young lady—for be her troubles and distresses what they might, a lady she surely was—whom he had pursued so far, and to whom he had spoken in language quite irrevocable, had now, in her small hand, his fate and fortunes.

There seemed to walk beside him, along his grassy path, an angry father, and the sneers and gabble of kindred, who had a right to talk, were barking and laughing at his heels. He knew very well what he had to count upon, and had known it all along. But it did not daunt him, either then or now.

Here was his first love, and an idol not created by his fancy, but, undoubtedly, the most beautiful girl he had ever seen. A first love devouring material so combustible; a generous fellow, impetuous, sanguine, dominated by imagination, and who had delivered eloquent lectures upon the folly of political economy, and the intrinsic tyranny of our social system.

These things troubled him, no doubt; but thus beset, he had no more notion of turning about than had honest Christian and Hopeful as they plodded through the Valley of the Shadow of Death. He felt, I dare say, pretty much as a knight when riding into the lists to mortal combat for the mistress of his heart.

He held himself now, so far as his own personal case went, irrevocably betrothed to his beautiful but cruel mistress; and so far from halting between two opinions, if what had passed this evening had been still unsaid, he would have gone round the world for a chance of speaking it.

Literally abiding by his promise, he left Wybourne as suddenly as he came.

Miss Max looked after him as the underwood hid him from view, with the somewhat blank and ruminating countenance which belongs to the lady about whose ears a favourite castle in the air has just tumbled.

"Well," said she, turning to her young companion, nodding, and looking wise, "that gentleman is gone on a fool's errand, I venture to say. Have you any idea where he's gone?"

"Not the least."

"I liked him very much. I hope he's

not going to make a fool of himself. I really thought he liked you. He is so full of romance. See how you blush!"

"I always do when I think I shall, and when I particularly wish not," she said, with a smile, but a little vexed.

"Well, I suspect, from what he said, that he is going to ask some young lady an interesting question; or, perhaps, he is actually engaged; goodness knows."

Miss Max was walking under the lordly trees towards home and tea, with her young cousin beside her.

"That's a blackbird," she says, listening for a moment. "What a delicious evening!"

"Has your mother set out again upon her usual mysterious journey?" inquired Miss Max.

"I fancy not—not yet, at least," answered the girl, listlessly.

"Well, I may say to you, I can't understand your mother the least, my dear."

The girl made no answer: she was looking up, with a listless and sad face, toward the fleecy clouds that now glowed in the tint of sunset, and the rooks, that make no holiday of Sunday, winging homeward, high in air, with a softened cawing.

CACKLERS.

Instinct, I suppose, we must call the moving force which makes a barn-door fowl cackle when she has laid an egg. It would be altogether better—better at any rate for the increase of the race of fowls—if the hen would wait until she had laid her allotted number of eggs, had sat upon them, and had hatched them into chickens, when, with living witnesses of her success in the perpetuation of her kind scratching by her side, she might strut about the farm-yard, flap her wings, plume herself, and cackle to her heart's content, with impunity. As it is, she announces to her limited world, too soon for her success in chicken raising, that she has laid an egg, by cackling. By thus prematurely and noisily glorifying herself upon having obtained the first step towards the honours of fowl maternity, the hen but invites the thrifty housewife to sally forth and search for the egg, over the production of which she is so proudly noisy and vain-glorious. And so the nest is robbed, and the incipient chick is straightway boiled or fried, beaten into a custard, or made into a savoury omelette, incorporated into the dressing of a salad, or used to give consistency to the matutinal rum-and-milk of the master of the house. Learning nothing by experience, yet not forgetting that it is her mission to lay eggs, the foolish hen lays another and another, cackles and is robbed as before. If by chance chickens are produced from any of her eggs, it is by their being warmed into life under the feathery breast of some vicarious mother, whose capacity for the duty imposed upon her is known and relied upon.

From this unfortunate instinct of cackling—unfortunate at least from a hen's point of view—from this counting of chickens before they are hatched, it comes that from so many eggs so few chickens are produced. But it is not hens alone which cackle when they have done, or begin to do, or resolve to do, or think of doing, something wonderful. Men and women individually, and communities and nations collectively, strut and cackle at the first thought of, or at the first step taken towards the doing of, something never destined to be done, and which is to fail mainly because of cackling. Human beings who cackle, inasmuch as they are supposed not to be governed by instinct, but by what we are accustomed to consider to be the higher attribute of reason, are, so far, greater fools than hens. Besides, the hen waits at any rate until she has taken the first step—until she has laid an egg. Mankind cackle when they have conceived an idea. Hence it is that so many ideas and schemes come to nought, or are carried to successful issue by some one not the originator of them.

Inventors and discoverers have often been cacklers, and thus the honours and profits of their inventions and discoveries have been lost to themselves, their very claim to even coincident invention and discovery being denied or doubted. They cackled, and their nests were robbed, and their eggs were hatched by others less scrupulous, but more industrious and persevering, than themselves. Trace the history of any great invention, and see how many claimants there are to it, the majority of whom, if the truth were known, would be found to have lost their claims by cackling. The successful application of most inventions and discoveries will be found to have been brought about, not by their inventors and discoverers who have cackled, but by practical and reticent men who have given to their crude ideas form and sub-

stance, and have not cackled till success was assured. Inventors and discoverers who have not cackled, and who have been capable of bringing to successful and practical use their inventions and discoveries, have generally secured to themselves the fruits of their ingenuity. It is not only that cackling makes the right of property in an idea, as in an egg, more precarious, but when failure ensues in the carrying of it out—even when no attempt is made at appropriation—ridicule is unsparingly heaped upon the cackler. In less enlightened times, inventors and discoverers who cackled have been imprisoned and burnt at the stake; now-a-days, cacklers whose ideas are impracticable, or who, if they are the contrary, have not the ability and force of character to carry them out before they are stolen, are derided as dreamers and madmen, and sometimes from disappointed brooding over that which they have not the power to advance beyond an idea, they actually become mad, and justify the estimate which was formed of them.

Authors and artists are often cacklers; but they do not suffer so often nor so much from their cackling as do inventors and discoverers; probably because there is less temptation to steal ideas or to carry out intentions from the elaboration of which so little fame or profit is to be made; or, perhaps, because the public manner in which the cacklers do their cackling deters others from forestalling them. Cackling writers, painters, or sculptors, who trumpet forth after a club-dinner that they are going to write an article on this subject or upon that, dramatise this novel, or burlesque that epic, paint this event, or chisel that figure or group, do more injury to their less demonstrative listeners than they do to themselves. Many a man capable of writing upon some particular subject, and with industry enough to do it quickly, and talent enough to do it well, has abandoned the intention, sometimes even after he had begun the work, because some cackler had announced that he was going to write upon the same subject. Many a reticent man finds himself thus publicly anticipated in the work, literary or artistic, which he has chalked out for himself, and for which he is eminently qualified. He is not the only loser: the loss suffered by the public is greater than his. These cacklers often, by their uncalled-for confidences, are tacitly permitted to acquire a sort of pre-emptive right to subjects which they either want the power or the industry to improve. In the United States, when a man pre-empts a quarter-section of government land, he must begin its improvement and cultivation, and must occupy it within a certain specified time, or vacate it in favour of some one else more able, if not more willing, than himself to perform the obligations which are the conditions of pre-emption. So I have often thought it would be well to establish a rule in literary and artistic clubs and coteries, that when a man publicly cackles over an idea, unless he works it out to the best of his ability within a reasonable time—not being prevented by illness or other unavoidable cause — he should be considered as having no right to complain if some one else should make the subject his own.

The mercantile classes are not given to cackling as a rule. They generally contrive to conceal and hatch, or try to hatch, all the eggs they lay, though they do not always get healthy chickens from them. They brag a good deal when they have done something great, and made much money; but they almost invariably keep their own counsel as to what they are going to do, and, if possible, as to what they are doing. The merchant is not heard announcing publicly at his club to other merchants who, like himself, are on the look-out for a good thing, that he is going, or has just gone, into speculation in indigo, or cotton, or saltpetre, or silk.

The shipowner does not proclaim aloud on 'Change what he thinks the best port to seek a cargo for, at least not until he has succeeded in getting charters for all his own vessels, and then he only gives his advice—for a consideration. The successful speculator in the funds, or in railway or mining shares, is notorious for his reticence. Even as a broker operating for a commission he generally declines to advise, but leaves his clients to decide for themselves the ventures they are to engage in, and, after they have decided, he is ready to execute their orders, to buy or to sell, provided he has a sufficient margin in hand, or has good reason to believe that they will be prepared with the necessary contango on settling day if they wish to hold over. Cackling amongst business men is rare, because it is ruinous. Cacklers who have embarked their means in mercantile pursuits, from cotton-brokers to costermongers, when they begin to cackle, immediately cease to prosper, and soon cease to trade.

Ministers of state and legislators are

great cacklers. The former cackle to the party which places them in power, the latter to the constituencies which elect them. The eggs which they lay and cackle over are not often stolen, because they are seldom worth stealing, and they are as rarely hatched, because they are either addled or not very assiduously sat upon; indeed, they are generally what are called in some parts of the country wind eggs. Diplomatists are supposed never to cackle, but the excessive care they take to mystify the world as to what they are about, in itself leads to discovery. When they do hatch their eggs, it is remarkable that there is never any certainty whether they may not produce innocent ducklings, as often as harmless chickens: venomous snakes, and stinging scorpions, as often as either.

Great potentates, presidents, kings, and emperors, have some of them been great cacklers.

Charles the First of England and Louis the Sixteenth of France lost their thrones and their heads, the one cackling over an egg laid by himself, from which he fondly hoped was to spring despotic power to him and his race, the other, brooding over an egg, the product of a long course of despotism, which had been handed down to him to hatch, and which, unfortunately, was not destroyed with him, but remained in the nest to be quickened by his republican successors, Robespierre, Marat, and the rest. From this egg sprang anarchy, confusion, death, and the many evils which from time to time for the last three-quarters of a century have devastated the fair land of France, and made her now and then a nuisance to her neighbours.

Napoleon the Third, one of the numerous progeny of that same egg, offered one of the latest examples of cackling too soon when he announced so melo-dramatically that his son "had received his baptism of fire at Saarbruck;" and the very latest cackler is the new-born French Republic, which, not old enough to lay an egg, is endangering the safety of the nest which it is preparing by announcing to the world that rather than harm shall come to it, it and all France will die in the ruins of Paris.

Philosophers of the peace school cackled too soon, as is proved by the present unhappy war; but they have not lost their egg, which was laid more than eighteen hundred years ago, nor has it become addled. The successful hatching is only delayed for a time. The offspring, "Peace on earth, goodwill to men," will be very welcome to the nations which are now exhausting themselves by strife, and by those who, like ourselves, have been in danger of being driven into the quarrel.

But fool as a hen proves herself to be when she cackles, because she has laid an egg, she is not half such a fool as when she sits upon eggs and hatches ducks, and does not know that they are not chickens until they take to the water, and to eating garbage, and is not sure of it even then. Her folly begins when she doesn't know the difference between her own shapely white eggs and the pale green squat ones of the duck; it increases to temporary insanity when she clucks about with pride and scratches for the sustenance of a lot of flat-footed spoon-billed creatures, with as much resemblance to chickens as the slender silvery salmon bears to the slimy broad-headed codfish, and it descends into absolute idiocy, when she flies on to an island stone to guard her spurious chicks from the dangers of the mill-pond. Mankind furnish examples of such folly and madness when they brood over and hatch schemes which, blinded by the pride of supposed maternity, they do not recognise as not their own until the evil which is in them begins unmistakably to show itself, and makes manifest their real nature.

If it were not for the warning cackle of hens the land would be overrun with fowls. If it were not for the warning cackle of men a brood of monsters might be hatched which would overrun and disturb the world.

'NEATH THE SCAUR.

The roseate light dies into purple-black,
Within the shadows of Plynlimmon's crest,
And mid the murky gloom of waning day
The bandit raven croaks from bare brown crag
His ghostly dirge.

The silver horns arise
Of night's white disc, rise up above the chain
Of yonder grey-lined hills. More glorious,
In weird fantastic beauty, show the wilds
'Neath winter's icy touch, than when the kiss
Of golden summer warms the landscape round,
And all is draped in green.

'Neath yon sharp ridge
Nestles the pirate kite; blue martens roost
Upon the shelves beyond, and on the scaur
The golden eagle spreads her dusky wings
Over her half-grown couplet: sighs the wind,
Driving the fleecy clouds across the face
Of the perturbed moon, and sobbing, wails,
Sending sweet echoes of an unknown song
Across the broad ravine. Dim, dreamy glimpse
Of spirit-land, of souls that freed from clay,
Seem far, yet near, and from the jasper gates

Of the great city, answer to our own,
With that grand mystery, which none shall read
Till things of earth dissolve, and time and space
Merge in the waters of eternity.

FROM BRADFORD TO BRINDISI.

IN TWO FLIGHTS. FLIGHT THE FIRST.

THE house of business with which I am connected is probably one of the largest "concerns" in the kingdom. None of your new-fangled mushroom excrescences, run up within the last few years, but a solid, old-fashioned, steady-going house, which has been established for centuries. It originally started in the carrying line, in which it still does an extensive trade, but of late years some of the junior partners, who have worked their way up into the firm, have tacked on little specialities of their own, so that in addition to our original carrying, we now do a banking business, a life insurance business, and have recently gone very extensively into fir-poles, metallic wire, and philosophical instruments. My connexion with the house extends over twenty years, but my occupation has been principally of a sedentary nature, and it is only lately that I have been called upon to travel. As representative of our house, I have visited most of the large and a great many of the small towns in the country during the past twelve months, but latterly the scene of my operations has been laid in Yorkshire and the North. In York itself the melancholy long street of Bootham has often echoed to my footfall; I have drunk in the keen and exhilarating air of the big moors between Pickering and Whitby: and I have wandered in Teesdale, which Walter Scott has immortalised in his poems, and which a more recent genius, kind, simple-hearted Thomas Creswick, loved to paint. I am known in grim Halifax and smoky Rochdale; in the romantic purlieus of Briggate and Boar-lane in Leeds I am no stranger; and the lovely Hebes in the quaint luncheon-cellar under St. George's Hall at Bradford are pleased to welcome my arrival. I was staying in Bradford in the early days of last October. My ears were growing accustomed to the "sabot clank," as Father Prout calls it, or, more prosaically, to the pattering of the wooden clogs on the pavement, and to that frightful creaking which all the ungreased wheels at Bradford are perpetually pouring forth. My eyes were growing accustomed to the smoke, and my nose to the smells, when one day, on my return to luncheon at the Victoria Hotel from a business excursion, the hall-porter told me that a telegram was awaiting me.

Owing to a recent transaction with which my house has had something to do, the receipt of a telegram has been robbed of a great deal of its ancient importance. Formerly one hesitated to open the light-coloured envelope enclosing the message, knowing that its contents must necessarily be of great weight, or such an expensive mode of communication would not have been resorted to. Now it may mean "chops and tomato sauce," or "bring your flageolet;" so that I was by no means prepared for anything so startling as these words, "Could you start for Brindisi on Thursday morning? Wire reply." The message was from the house. I accordingly wired reply, and the result of a further interchange of wiring was, that I found myself early on Thursday morning at the Cannon-street Station, with a little sheaf of coupons in my pocket, which would carry me to Munich, the utmost limit to which I could book. Travelling through France being, to a certain extent, considered dangerous, and directly contrary to the instructions of the house, my way lay through Ostend, bound for which port a newly-built boat, a great improvement on the old cockleshells, but still far beneath the Holyhead and Kingstown steamers in size and accommodation, lay with her steam up, ready to receive us. Close by her was the Calais packet, to which only two passengers intrusted themselves. We had some five-and-twenty passengers on board, all foreigners, I imagined, with the exception of one Englishman and myself. The wind was blowing pretty fresh, there was a tolerable amount of sea on, and the foreigners, as is their wont, made themselves up into extraordinary looking bundles, and lay at full length on the deck, never moving until we arrived at Ostend. The old custom of refusing to allow you to land with anything in your hand is done away with, and carrying our carpet-bags and wrappers, we hurried to the railway, intending to get some dinner before the departure of the train. It was then nearly three o'clock, I had had nothing since a very slight breakfast at seven A.M., and my appetite had become sharpened, not merely by the sea air, but by the recollection of that very excellent buffet at the Calais station, where everything is ready prepared, so clean and appetisingly odoriferous, for the traveller arriving by the boat. At Ostend station, however, there is no buffet, and no time allowed for one to

go to any restaurant in the town, which is at some little distance, so that with the exception of some particularly stodgy loaves, filled with currants, which the old lady who sold them called "gateaux," but which the Flemish porter characterised as "boonz," I was compelled to depend for sustenance on the contents of my flask, and a hasty morsel snatched at Verviers, until we reached Cologne at eleven o'clock at night.

The Hôtel Disch is the house I generally "use" at Cologne (I am afraid this travelling is rendering my phraseology dreadfully commercial!); but the rain was coming down in such torrents, and I had heard such an excellent account of the Hôtel du Nord, which is in the immediate neighbourhood of the station, that I determined to try it. I accordingly got into the omnibus belonging to that establishment, and found that I had for a fellow-passenger, an old man of Hebraic aspect, dressed in dirt and braid, with a pinchbeck ring on the forefinger of his filthy hand, whom I had noticed from time to time on the journey. I addressed to him some remarks in German about the violence of the down-pour, but he looked at me in a helpless way, and said, "Ah, non parly, non parly!" then to himself, "I should like to tell him I should be dashed glad to get something to eat in this dashed place."

The Hôtel du Nord deserves the praises which have been bestowed upon it. It is a splendid house, admirably kept, and though it was midnight before we reached there, the cuisine was in full swing, and the whole establishment on the alert. After a hasty wash I sat down to supper with two or three of my German travellers (not being desirous either of being mistaken for a madman, or converted into a courier, I make a point, when abroad, of never associating with my fellow-countrymen), and we were getting on merrily enough, when a cold shadow was thrown across us by the advent of the Great Briton. There was no possibility of mistaking him—his cleanliness, his long wristbands, his gold locket, his neatly parted hair, and his intolerable insolence, all betokened him a native of our fair isle. Then he seated himself at a table and called "waiter" in a loud voice, and on the waiter presenting himself, uttered another dissyllabic word, "supper." The courteous waiter bending down began murmuring into the stranger's ear a list of various succulent little dishes, but the Great Briton sneered at them all, and burst forth again with a bray of "cold meat." When I left the room he and his companion were indulging in a meal of cold veal and bottled ale, which, from its indigestibility and nastiness, must have forcibly reminded them of their native land.

Now to bed, to find traces of advanced civilisation since my last visit, in improved cleanliness and carpeted floor, but to recognise old friends in the pie-dish and milk-jug apparatus for washing, in the bed with the enormous sloping pillows, which keep you all night in a semi-upright position, and with the "decke," which invariably falls off, and leaves you frozen till morning. Up at six, and off by the quick train which runs in and out along the little railway skirting the Rhine from Cologne to Mayence. Ah, me!

> When first I saw ye, Cari luoghi,
> I'd scarce a beard upon my face!

There was no railway in those days, and the last time but one that I visited the Rhine was in the company of one whom the public—which at one time so delighted in him—has forgotten, but who was my dear friend, and whose memory a certain small knot of us yet keep green—Albert Smith. He was visiting the "exulting and abounding river" then, with an eye to business, and I who knew it so well was acting as his cicerone. And now every crag, every ruined castle, brings back to me some remembrance of him, and the refrain of the song, which we wrote together, and which he sung with such point,

> Sitting on the deck together, in the autumn weather fine,
> Drinking what the waiter calls, eine halbe flasche Moselwein,

is ringing in my ears. No awning-covered steam-boats now on the Rhine, no pleasant tourist passenger traffic, no rafts that I see (I lived three days on a raft once, and barring being nearly swamped in the whirlpool of the Lörelei, had a very good time of it), nothing but a few black tugs dragging heavily laden barges against the stream, or here and there peasants crossing from one bank to another, and shovelling the water away with their flat wooden spades, as is their custom.

Was it at Bonn or at Coblentz that I first saw a French prisoner? It must have been at the latter place, after we had crossed the broad bridge over the Moselle, and had caught a glimpse of Ehrenbreitstein on the opposite bank of the river. He was a little man, whose melancholy appearance scarcely consorted well with his rather

comic style of apparel, for he had on the red military trousers of his nation, a long Prussian soldier's over-coat, and a white English billycock hat. He was an object of much remark, and to all the staring and pointing and grimaces he said nothing, but he looked round on his captors, and then shrugged his shoulders, and expectorated in a manner which meant much. More French prisoners hired out to farmers, and hard at work in the fields. More Prussian soldiers right about facing, and going through the various rudiments of drill, a glimpse of Mayence, the strongly fortified, a dash through Darmstadt, the neat and pretty residence of our Princess Alice, a reminiscence of the whole line of country from Cologne to Asschaffenburg, ruddy with the glorious autumnal tint on vine-yard and forest, and scarp and fell.

I am to have two hours' rest at Würzburg, and there I propose taking my meal, as I have had nothing to eat since early morning in Cologne. Entering into conversation with the waiter, who attends upon me in the admirable restaurant at the station, I am assured by him that the half-past seven train by which I propose travelling is merely a luggage train, with a few passenger carriages attached, and the arrival of which at its destination is entirely dependent on the guard, who has it shunted, or switched, or sided, according to the number of trains containing troops or wounded men which he may meet on the way. I had much better, my friendly waiter advises me, remain there until two the next morning, when there is an express train which goes straight to Munich, and is in correspondence with the day mail for Italy. It is now five in the afternoon, and to remain at a railway for nine hours is, as we should say commercially, "a large order." Nevertheless, I find that the waiter is right, so that what I have to do is to endeavour to amuse myself as best I can. Let me first look through the various departments of the station itself. It is apparently a great centre of organisation, and its superiority to anything of its class in England is at once manifest. Here are the offices for the issue of tickets, for the weighing and forwarding of the luggage, the post-office, the telegraph office—all separate large rooms, all admirably fitted and appointed; the restaurant, two large rooms, one for first and second, the other for third-class passengers, and the Etappen-Commando. What is the Etappen-Commando? to what language do the words belong? I think I have seen it mentioned in the letters of the war correspondents to the London newspapers: but I confess I am utterly ignorant of their meaning. I look through the glazed doors on which the mystic words are inscribed, and I see a very comfortable room, fitted with arm-chairs, and writing-tables covered with very official-looking documents, the walls hung round with maps and plans. At the largest table is seated a white-haired, white-bearded, stiff-built, stalwart officer, and two or three younger men, apparently writing from his dictation, or carrying out his instructions. I have no further time to devote to the Etappen-Commando, for at a kind of temporary booth established on the platform, and labelled "Hülfs Verein," I notice some excitement going forward, and strolling thither I find a number of men and women, all wearing the red cross badge of the Geneva convention on their arms, occupied in sorting big loaves of bread, and in tapping small barrels of beer, while one of them is cutting up a ham into anything but Vauxhall slices. I find, too, a little gathering of the townspeople on the platform, and, on inquiring, I learn that a train of Prussian soldiers going to the front is immediately expected. In a few minutes it arrives, the engine and some of the carriages decked with laurels, and the soldiers who compose its load shouting lustily, and singing the "free German Rhine." No sooner is it alongside than the Geneva auxiliaries rush to it, carrying enormous baskets of bread and krügs of beer. This last gift seems to be superfluous, as the "liquoring up" has evidently been going on at previous stations, and the majority of the men have already had more than is good for them. But they are fêted, and caressed, and applauded, and go on their way rejoicing. They are scarcely clear of the station before we receive information that another train may be expected immediately. When it arrives we find it a train of a very different character, filled with wounded men. If the demonstrations of the Hülfs Verein were genial to the train which has just left, they are enthusiastic to the new arrival; the doors of the great luggage waggons, thrown open, and disclosing numbers of men in a helpless condition, are at once besieged by the provender bringers, and those who are well enough to descend are helped out, and led to the restaurant with the greatest kindness, and there entertained with much generosity. The kindly feeling is contagious. I catch it as soon as

any one, and rush about distributing the contents of my cigar-case, which I had brought from home, then buying a whole lot of German-grown cigars, which are very cheap, and I dare say very nasty, but which are undoubtedly very large, and very much liked. Some of the wounded men, as provident as Nelson's coxswain, take the cigars, but hint a desire for schnaps, and straightway the kreutzers fly. Then a rapid inspection of some of the wounded, who reside in or are billeted on the neighbourhood, is made by the grey-headed officer from the Etappen Commando, they are drafted off, the train proceeds with the rest, and we are left again in silence.

I had only ordered, not eaten, my dinner, and there is no more agreeable means of passing the time than by inwardly refreshing oneself, so I returned to the restaurant, and sat down to an excellent meal, and amused myself with looking around me. And, in the first place, I am grateful that this weary length of time is to be got through rather at a foreign than at an English railway station. I recal the English waiting-rooms, of which I have seen so much lately, the soul-depressing drab colour of the walls; the hard seats so primly arranged; the flying leaves of texts suspended like religious towels over towel-horses; the cheering advertisement of the Railway Insurance Company; and the never-failing reference to the exact spot in the neighbourhood where Horniman's tea is to be procured. Now I am seated in a splendid salle, brightly painted, well lit, warm, and cheerful, little marble-topped tables scattered around; all the chairs are easy and comfortable; the walls are painted in fresco, after classical designs, and one end of the room is filled up by a large sideboard, half walnut-wood, half looking-glass, on which plate, and glass, and china, and bottles of bright liquids, and long flasks with tinfoil necks, and bon-bon boxes, and all sorts of piquant edibles, the coquetry of charcuterie, are tastefully arranged, and in the little cosey place behind three or four clean, comfortable, and sufficiently well, but certainly not over-dressed women, are seated. Enter a short, stout man, who asks for a glass of beer, drinks it standing, and departs. Enter a thin, gentlemanly, bearded man, wrapped in a large cloak with a fur collar, leading an Italian greyhound by a string; he seats himself at a table, and calls for a cup of coffee, and, while drinking it, chats pleasantly with the waiter. Enter a high official of the railway in uniform, who goes straight to the bar, into the sacred precincts of which he is admitted. This gentleman is old, and not particularly well favoured, but he has evidently what is vulgarly called the gift of the gab, and bears out the truth of the French philosopher's saying, "Avec les hommes l'amour entre par les yeux, avec les femmes par les oreilles," for the ladies crowd around him, and clap their hands and scream with delight at his little witticisms, and vie with each other in trying to do him honour. One of these young women bends forward to look at the clock (the hands of which seem to have a very odd movement, moving palpably forward with great jumps like the hands of a clock in a theatrical scene), takes down her cloak and hood, unhooks a play bill, and is off to the theatre; the railway official making a jocular offer to accompany her, which is negatived by the other ladies amongst whom he is detained. Then I go out for a "constitutional," and for an hour and a half pace up and down the broad platform, not quite understanding why I am there at all, and quite incapable of making out what day of the week it is, or how long I have been away from home.

When I return to the restaurant I find the whole staff of the Etappen-Commando, grey-headed chief, and several subalterns, and a sprinkling of civilians, established round a table. Each man has a huge glass of beer before him; each man has a pipe or cigar in his mouth; and each man is talking at the top of his voice, and pantomiming with every one of his ten fingers. Their talk is of the war of course, and I notice that, whereas they speak of France and Frenchmen with contempt, they speak of England and Englishmen with disgust. Sitting by, smoking my cigar, and sipping my hock and seltzer water, I hear the German opinion of my country's doings expressed in all candour. Unquestionably the speakers were ignorant of my nationality, or out of courtesy they would have been more reticent; but their talk did them a great deal of good, and me no harm, and, moreover, a great deal of what they said had the strange merit of being strictly true. So they talked —ye gods, how they talked! — until midnight, when, with an amount of bowing and bending which would have done the Lord Chamberlain's heart good to witness, they wished each other good-night, and departed.

Then came on a very sad time indeed. I could not eat any more; I had drunk and smoked more than enough; all the ladies in the bar retired save one, who composed herself to sleep in the darkest corner; the solitary waiter left "tucked his head under his wing," like the robin in the nursery song, and went to sleep too. I had no book, so I could not read; I could not sit staring straight before me, so I started to my feet, and for two hours walked up and down that long room, weaving foot patterns of great intricacy among the tables. The train, which was to have started at two, did not leave till three; but I got possession of my carriage, had myself locked in, and wrapping myself in my huge Ulster over-coat, I pulled my sealskin cap over my eyes, and went to sleep. I only woke once at some station where our train stopped to receive two coffins containing the bodies of officers of high rank, who had fallen in the war, and then I slept again until we reached Munich.

BRIGANDS.

The world, not long since, was affrighted and horrified by the deeds of brigands in Italy, of brigands in Greece, and of brigands in Spain. Those deeds are not forgotten yet; but they were punished to a certain extent, and it was hoped we had heard the last of them. But no; that happy conclusion was not to be. The plague was not stayed; and now it has broken out again in the country where we may almost fear it is permanently endemic. In the second week of October last, a band of brigands, said to number about twenty, crossed the frontier from Turkey, marched into Greece unobserved, and, though including men well known to the authorities as possessing intimate acquaintance with the country round Livadeia, were allowed to take up their quarters in the neighbourhood of that flourishing provincial town without discovery.

On Tuesday, the 11th, they entered this town of six thousand inhabitants, while it was still light, and carried off Mr. Philo, the deputy of, or member for Livadeia, proprietor of a large landed estate in the vicinity, and Mr. Leonardides, in whose house he was staying. The capture was effected in accordance with their usual tactics. During the short Grecian twilight, six brigands walked into the town in parties of two, looking as like peasants as they could. They had ascertained that the men of the house were to be absent all night on farm business, and that only the deputy and his host remained; so they crept in at the door unnoticed, pinioned and gagged their captives, and intimidated and silenced the women before any alarm could be given. Other brigands were, at the same time, watching in the street, to prevent anybody's leaving or entering the house. After it was dark the captives were carried off, the brigands taking them separately through the streets, and thus gained the open country. They declared to the women, before leaving the house, that if any information was given, and a pursuit attempted, they would murder their prisoners. Their deed was, therefore, concealed for some hours, and they had the whole night to gain their place of concealment.

In this astounding case of outrage, it is specially to be noted—as a clue to the motive of other like outrages—that great sympathy was felt for Mr. Philo, who is personally well known and highly esteemed by the best men in Athens, where he generally resides. He is a man of education, has been elected president of the Chamber of Deputies in King Otho's time, and occupies a high political position without being either an official or a place-hunter. He is one of the independent provincial landed proprietors of whom Greece may be proud, as being gentlemen in education and in conduct. One of his daughters resides in Bavaria, as maid of honour, with the dethroned queen, Amalia.

Mr. Philo's case is by no means uncommon (he and his companion were ransomed for something more than three thousand pounds sterling). It may be instructive to cast a glance at the peculiar features of this class of crimes. They are especially hideous, revolting, and diabolical. Why? What is it that makes brigandage a stigma and an opprobrium to the country that fails to repress it? Brigandage is robbery, personal violence, often murder. In other countries besides Italy and Greece, unhappily, robbery, personal violence, and murder are committed without exciting the same execration as the deeds perpetrated by the brigands of Greece. Garrotting and plundering the old and infirm; stoppages by night on lonely roads, with threats of "Your money or your life!" burglaries, ending in the shedding of blood, for the sake of a booty in cash or valuables, are all bad; bad enough, and to

spare: but universal feeling regards them as venial offences when compared with the system of kidnapping so ruthlessly practised by the robbers of Greece. Why should it be so?

Brigandage is robbery, personal violence, extortion, kidnapping, torture, and murder combined; but, if we inspect it closely, it is something more; and it is that something more which excites our execration. An ordinary robber, garrotter, or murderer attacks his victim, and his victim only. He despoils him of what he has, and there is an end of it. He makes no one but the patient suffer, at the time, or previous to the consummation of the act of violence. The brigand makes his victim merely an instrument to work on the feelings of others—the screw to be put on the affections of his friends. A merely rich man, in the hands of brigands, supported by no love or respect from without, would be comparatively of little worth. It is not the prisoner who is squeezable, but his belongings. A housebreaker, resisted and forced to fight, will kill his opponent in the heat of the strife. The brigand in cold blood tortures his prisoner, and kills him, if need be, to extort from others the money demanded. The prisoner may care less about his own sufferings, and his own life, than his friends care for him. The brigand knows it, calculates upon it, and takes advantage of it. He is aware that affection is sometimes stronger than self.

It is this infliction of vicarious torture, this cowardly crushing of one heart by cruelties exercised on or threatened to another, which brands brigandage with its superlative infamy. By seizing the person of one beloved object, the brigand thrusts his hand simultaneously into many pockets, and so commits a concentrated theft. He robs in safety people at a distance. He does not give fair fight, nor anything like it. There is no possibility of an honest stand-up struggle; no pretence to the conduct of loyal belligerents. We should call it a thoroughly un-English mode of attack. Our highwaymen of old would have scorned to be guilty of such proceedings. And yet we may note now and then, in England, some faint shadow of that peculiar line of business.

In a room in a by-street near a fashionable square, sits a close-shaven man with grisly hair, expressionless eyes, and bushy whiskers. Books about the peerage and the landed gentry are his Bible and his Testament. He has made it his careful study to know the habits of the young men about town with expectations, taking peculiar interest in those who promise to outrun the constable; judiciously and opportunely he issues letters, containing the most philanthropic offers. Temporary embarrassments are to be cleared away, ready money is to be supplied for a mere formality, a nothing—a few scrawls on a bit of paper. Assistance is supplied from time to time on the same easy terms, until the benevolent gentleman thinks it right to stop. When the young debtor is fairly caught, the strings of the net are drawn tightly round him. If he do not pay what is asked, he is ruined for life; and of course it was known that he could not pay. But what does that matter? By means unknown his paterfamilias is made acquainted with the state of things; also a wealthy maiden aunt, supposed to have been fond of the curly-headed boy. A family council is held, assisted perhaps by the family legal adviser. It turns out that measures have been cleverly taken: resistance would only cause unavailing scandal; purses are clubbed, funds are somehow raised, and the captive is ransomed from the brigand's—I beg the smooth-shaved gentleman's pardon — from the money-lender's clutches.

There is a cottage of gentility with a neglected garden, all the more striking for its negligence. Its roses luxuriate unchecked by the knife, its summer fruits hang ungathered on the bough. Within sits a fair young lady, pale and thin, and prematurely growing old. She is nursing a little boy, her consolation and her stay. But where is the father? Ah, where indeed? She married, for love, one unworthy of her. He absents himself often, scarcely condescending to put forth a pretext, and on returning just keeps up appearances. Relations, guessing the truth, whisper to each other, "I'm sure they are not a happy couple." The neighbours, more sharp-eyed, know all about it. He now and then ill-treats her. When? At his first truant outbreak, her parents said nothing; at his second, they remonstrated. Ill-treatment the first. After his third, he wanted more money. Refused; ill-treatment. After the fourth, money granted; no ill-treatment. And so forth; month after month, and year after year. He has her, and he means to keep her. Having her, he can defy the reproaches and bleed the pockets of those who love her dearly. It has gone on hitherto, to avoid blazoning such sorrows to the world; but it can

hardly go on indefinitely. The protection of the law will have to be appealed to; and the sooner the better, say we. But the case itself—is it one of incompatibility, domestic unhappiness, cruelty, and the rest; or is it an application of brigandage to civilised life? They might think it a clever stroke in Greece, not unworthy to have been invented there.

Brigandage is the pursuit of wicked ends by the agency of fear respecting the fate of others. The Reign of Terror, in the first French Revolution, was political brigandage pushed to its utmost limits. It was a standing threat to this effect: "You see the guillotine set up in permanence; you see how we send to it, in any numbers we please, venerable old men, delicately nurtured women, and almost girls. Shape your political conduct strictly in accordance with our views, or we will sacrifice those dearest to you, for the maintenance and confirmation of our power." Was not this true brigandage, with ambition for the passion to be gratified instead of greed?

Social brigandage assumes hydra-headed shapes, some of them too terrible to be pictured here. The victims ordinarily selected are those who have the most, and the most respectable belongings, or who happen to be the most defenceless—clergymen, medical men, schoolmasters, single ladies, widows, young men just entering life. Not seldom the pressure becomes so strong and so maddening, that the wretched sufferer resolves to save his friends from pain by rushing into the self-sacrifice of suicide, as the less dreadful evil of the two. Can it be wondered at that, even with strong minds, continued mental torture should end in insanity?

Nor are the British Isles the only country in which social brigands hunt after prey. In France, they have a special name, "chanteurs," and the exercise of their profession is known as "chantage." Canler, ancien chef du service de sureté, of the French police, quietly tells us, in his repulsive Memoires, that he knew in Paris at least fifteen of those gentry, who carried on their trade for many years with great success, without the police being able to touch them. The reason of their apparent impunity is plain: nobody dared to complain of their proceedings. Nevertheless, the authorities managed, with difficulty, to get together some amount of evidence, and a few "chanteurs" were sent to adorn the prisons with their presence. At the time of Canler's writing (1862), four ex-chanteurs were living in Paris, in very easy circumstances. The first, formerly secretary to a commissaire de police, had got together a fortune of four hundred a year. The second lived in the Champs-Elysées; he possessed pictures worth more than a hundred thousand francs, and a country château in the Touraine. The third, owning property near the Barrière de Courcelles, led the life of a respectable independent gentleman, and was highly esteemed by all the neighbourhood, who were ignorant of his antecedents. The fourth was also exceedingly well off. All of them, after feathering their nests, had bid adieu to their brigandage, and were sheltering, under the cover of an irreproachable conduct, the produce of a course of vile machinations and shameful frauds.

A favourite branch of "chantage" in France is the pillage of those unfortunate men who, having sinned against honesty on one occasion only, and expiated their fault in prison, strive to lead a life of probity and to merit sympathy, if not respect. Chanteurs of this class have almost all taken rank in the bagne, and their conscience has long been seared by habits of crime. They carefully search out some former prison-companion, who would be ruined in the eyes of the world by the simple fact of having suffered imprisonment, but who is endeavouring hard to return to society and to obtain a subsistence by honest labour. Once found, they fasten on him as an old acquaintance, and the work of brigandage begins.

One day, there stepped into Canler's bureau a good-looking man, respectably dressed, who said: "Monsieur, my name is H. I am the owner of an establishment which is growing more and more prosperous every day. I am happily married, and the father of two dear children. In short, monsieur, for several years past I have enjoyed almost perfect happiness, when a wretch came and robbed me of all my joys and destroyed every hope for the future. I must state"—blushing crimson with shame—"that, fifteen years ago, I was tried for a mercantile forgery, and for that criminal act, committed in a moment of madness, I was sentenced to five years of penal servitude. I underwent my punishment in the midst of the ignoble beings by whom bagnes are filled. It was through seeing them every day, and hearing their conversation, that I felt the full enormity of my fault: and I resolved to retrieve it, at the expiration of my sentence, by an

industrious and honourable life. Heaven seemed to bless my repentance. Once free, I came to Paris, where I was not known. By hard work I succeeded in establishing myself in a small way of business. It was then that I married a charming woman, who, as well as her family, is ignorant of my past misconduct, and who every day exhorts her children to imitate their father's example."

Here the poor man, overcome by his feelings, was obliged to pause in his narrative. He soon continued: "I believed that the expiation had been in proportion to the fault, and that I should be permitted to enjoy a little repose, when a wretch named B. met me, about eighteen months ago. I recognised him as having been at the bagne at the same time as myself. He came to my house, congratulated me on my good fortune, and obtained information respecting my circumstances. Two days afterwards, he presented himself again, under the pretext of borrowing fifty francs, which I dared not refuse him, for he could ruin me with a single word. A few days afterwards, he came for a hundred francs, stating that he wanted it to meet a bill. And then he made fresh demands of successively more exorbitant sums, enforcing them all by the threat of exposing me to my newly acquired family and connexions. He has already extorted from me more than six thousand francs: if this goes on, I shall soon be ruined. Consequently, monsieur, I determined, happen what may, to put myself in your hands, and beg you to protect me from this villain."

"But," asked Canler, "have you never tried to make B. understand how infamous his conduct is?"

"Often, monsieur; but whenever I tell him he is ruining me, he answers, 'Bah! bah! All stuff and rubbish! You must shell out, or else I will tell everybody, everywhere, that you are nothing but a galley-slave'!"

He wept bitterly as he concluded his story. Canler comforted him as well as he could, and dismissed him with the promise that he would personally attend to his affair. Next day, by Canler's orders, B. was arrested by two agents of police, and brought to the bureau. There, after a lecture on his baseness, for which he, probably, did not care a pin, he was served with an order of the prefect of police, expelling him for life from the capital. The complainant, from that moment, was troubled no more, and his family were never pained by the threatened revelation. Unfortunately, not every one who falls a prey to brigands can call forth a Deus ex machinâ, a chef de sureté, or an irresponsible préfet de police, to rescue him.

How, then, can the schemes and stratagems of brigands of society be baffled and defied? The answer is so plain that it becomes almost a stupid truism. If everybody was always circumspect, straightforward, self-denying, sinless; if nobody was ever unwary, weak, foolish, dishonest, immoral, wicked; if nobody thought of tempting others, and nobody dreamt of courting temptation; if nobody ever laid traps for others, even if anybody would fall into a trap, if laid; if a few other grand alterations could be made, why then —why then, indeed, the world would be a very different sort of world from what it is.

MISS PONSONBY'S COMPANION.

In Twelve Chapters.

CHAPTER III. THE INVISIBLE THIEF.

It is not a pleasant thing, it may be conceded, to lose a ten-pound note; but still there are various ways of behaving under such a calamity. If you cannot, after such a deprivation, evoke a sardonic smile, at least assume a decorous dignity. A miserable joke or an apposite proverb will carry off the thing much better than a hang-dog silence, which at once marks you as an immediate object for the most humiliating pity at the hand of a man's worst and most aggressive enemies —his second-hand friends. A certain dismal consolation, too, may be by some persons derived by the crescendo process, as thus: the fellow is a rascal, say, and I confess I should like to fit him with Luke's iron crown, having first stretched him carefully out on Damien's bed of steel; but still I have much to be grateful for in the fact that the scamp did not take my twenty-pound note, my four-post bed, or my cellar of wine, or my wife, or, in fact, if that's all, my life. Philosophy, cosey in its snug arm-chair, has devised many such cataplasms for human ills; has often shown, indeed, that money is a mere phantasma, and proved a thousand times that there is no such thing as pain; and yet the idiotic world will go on nevertheless scraping together gold, and screaming out when it is hurt.

In the present instance, Miss Ponsonby was far too distracted at her loss to think of posing herself in any philosophical attitudes of sham resignation. The loss so vexed and alarmed her, so fretted her brain, and wrung her thrifty heart, that she was, for the moment, indifferent to all appearances. A lady by birth and education as she was, if she had been well enough at that moment, she would have run right away down Crampton High-street, like Molière's Avare, screaming, "Thieves! thieves! I've lost a ten-pound note!" Even now, weak and worn as she was, she could not contain herself, although in the presence of the new doctor. She stood there, tottering, at the head of the stairs, clinging to the banisters like a broken-down Cassandra, an old Lady Macbeth, at the last gasp, or a dilapidated Banshee, proclaiming the emigration of the old family, and the consequent close of her ghostly engagement. Each and all of these characters did the distracted old lady of fortune alternately resemble. Miss Dampier flew up-stairs, swift as a bird, and before Mercy or Mr. Tresham could run to her aid, caught her aunt in her arms just as she was in the very act of falling faint and exhausted at the stair-head. In a moment, however, the young doctor had released her of the burden, and with two or three prompt, yet soothing words, assured her that there was no danger. The three then lifted the inconsolable old lady carefully into her sanctum, a snug little room adjoining her bedroom, where some black profile portraits, cut out with the scissors, hung in oval frames over the mantel-piece, and an old-fashioned bureau, open, and strewn with papers, stood up in a corner by one of the windows.

"Dear, dear aunt," said Lilly Dampier, kneeling beside the almost delirious old lady, and stroking her thin, cold hands, "what is it you have lost? Where was it? No doubt it is all safe. There's no one been here to-day, except I and Mercy. Has there, Mercy?"

"Not as I knows on," said that person; "no one at least that I've set *my* eyes upon, but there's been the works of darkness here somehow. The Lord deliver us!"

"I'll have justice," said the old lady, recovering as if by a violent effort, and gasping out every word as if on the verge of a fainting fit. "Lilly, I will find that note. Let me go now." And, as she spoke, Miss Ponsonby chided and almost shook Lilly in the passion of the moment, as if she was grappling, in her feeble way, with the thief himself.

"My dear madam," said the young doctor, sharply and quickly, "pray calm yourself. You seem weak; you breathe with difficulty, and to give way to this excitement is injurious to you in the highest degree." Then he turned to Mercy, and said, in a stern, prompt way: "Have you any sal-volatile in the house? If so, run directly for the bottle and bring it, and a wine-glass, and some cold water. If you have no sal-volatile, get some brandy. We must give a restorative at once. Don't stand there repeating texts that don't the least apply, but go quick."

Almost immediately that Miss Ponsonby had drank the glass of opaline liquid, she seemed to suddenly grow stronger and calmer. She even tottered, with Lilly's help, to the bureau, to show her where she had left the ten-pound note, with some others, the night before. Then she suddenly relapsed for a moment into hysterical tears, faint screams, cries for justice, and denunciations of felonious persons in general, with a violence of feeling, as Tresham began quickly to think, quite out of all reasonable and sane proportion to the extent of the loss. But he took a wide and generous view of the matter, and concluded that the rich old maid was probably not so much lamenting the mere ten pounds as regretting the loss of confidence it would produce and the detracting views of human nature it would encourage. But he took far too liberal an estimate of that contracted, selfish, and acidulated mind.

"Mr. Tresham," she said, her pride sobering her as she grew more composed, "I am sorry you see me for the first time in such a state of vexation and excitement, but this loss is really most extraordinary and unaccountable. I had the money last night. I left it there on my desk, and when I left the room Lilly locked the door for me, and gave me the key as usual. To-day I get up and go in, and two hours after I miss this ten-pound note; some one's robbed me. You locked the door, last night, did you not, Lilly?"

"Oh, yes, aunt."

"It is very unaccountable," said Tresham, after a moment's thought; "very. Are there no workpeople or charwomen about the house who might have been tempted by this money?"

"I really don't know, Mr. Tresham," said Miss Ponsonby. "I have had no reason before—but—well, one doesn't know

whom to trust in a place like this. I have never yet found out our present charwoman in any act of dishonesty, but there's no knowing."

"Oh, aunt, dear," said Miss Dampier, "you could not suspect that good, nice Mrs. Lawford? She's so industrious and respectful, and I have never seen her upstairs, except when she was scouring the spare room."

"My dear, you don't know the world," said her aunt. "Dishonest persons, as Mr. Tresham will tell you, are often plausible enough."

"But, dear aunt, I was by your side talking till you fell asleep, and no one entered the room afterwards till you called."

"You ought not to have left me. If you had not left me this would not have happened." Miss Ponsonby uttered this complaint with the fretfulness of an invalid, and a good deal of that tyranny that rich patronesses sometimes exercise towards their protégés.

Tresham was quick to the rescue. Instinctively he seemed to shrink from hearing his patient assume a tone of authority and querulous complaint towards Miss Dampier. Feeling Miss Ponsonby's pulse, he said, "Yes, the sal-volatile has done you good. I should strongly advise you now to go to bed. This excitement and talking is very injurious to you, and may "set up" a state of the throat and chest that would keep you awake half the night. Miss Dampier, you must plead with me."

At that moment the door flew open, and in ran Susan, the pretty little maid-servant, very red with running, her bonnet on hind-part before, and the pound of arrowroot in her hand. Finding nobody down-stairs on her return, the girl, fearing something had happened, had run up to see where everybody was. She drew back on seeing a stranger.

"You never came for my letter for the four o'clock post, Susan," said Miss Ponsonby. "You positively are the most careless girl that ever was known. You really seem to have no head—no head at all. There, give Mercy the arrowroot and go."

Susan seemed heedless of these generalised accusations, and gave the arrowroot to the time-server Mercy, who nudged and muttered a rebuke, from which Susan, a strong, sturdy girl, broke forth, and pushed again to the front, being frank, bold, and unencumbered with any Oriental ideas of obedience.

"But if you please, mum—yes I will, Mercy—if you please 'm, I did come, but you were asleep, and I did not desire to wake you, mum, so I took the letter off the desk just where I seed it when you told me when I brought the beef-tea. I put it into the post by the baker's, mum, and the postman came up just then, and told me it was all right. Yes I will, Mercy. I've done nothing to be ashamed of, and I will."

It was natural that Tresham and Miss Dampier should smile at the little maid's fervid explanation and Mercy's indignation at her self-justification, for the by-play was worthy of Wilkie's pencil.

"Come here, come here, girl," said Miss Ponsonby, sternly, from the old-fashioned round-backed arm-chair by the door, into which she had sunk.

Susan approached, half frightened, and the moment she was in reach the old lady's thin hand flew at her, and gripped her convulsively by the arm.

"It was she took it," she screamed; "this Susan stole it—this was the girl—stole it when I was asleep. Call the police! Don't let her escape! Lock the doors! I will have my ten pounds. Give me the ten pounds."

"I am sure Susan would not steal anything," said Miss Dampier. "Dear aunt, do control yourself. Mr. Tresham, isn't her head perhaps wandering? You would not for the world, would you, Susan?"

"I could wager my word, Miss Ponsonby," said Tresham, "that this girl is no thief."

Before Susan could recover her astonishment sufficiently, the door again flew open, and in bounced a good-looking, stout, active charwoman, with a wet scrubbing-brush and flannel in one hand and a piece of soap in the other.

"What's all this, I should like to know, about my Susan?" she said, in a tone of almost aggressive protest, as she made a dash at Susan, and carried her by a coup de main. "Beg your pardon, madam and miss, but I happened to be going up-stairs with my pail, and I heard Miss Ponsonby cry out that my Susan had stolen ten pounds, which, I say, is an onpossible thing, for my Susan's been well brought up, though we are poor people, as you may say, and she would never go for to do it. Only just look at her now. You can see she don't even know what you mean. Rich people mislay their money, and then go and lay it to the charge of poor girls, whose character is all they have to

depend upon. So you'll please take a month's notice from my Susan from this day, mum."

In the midst of this scene—for the flood of the honest woman's indignation was not easily stopped—Mr. Tresham, promising to send some composing medicine, quietly took his leave. The last person's face on whom his eyes rested in that room was not, you may depend upon it, that of Miss Ponsonby. Miss Dampier having bowed to him, did not turn again as he left. She was intent on tranquillising her aunt and pleading for Susan. Why should he have cared for that? Yet he did. Talk of woman's vanity!—but as he was a man, I must be merciful to him.

As he passed through the hall the doctor looked into the parlour, where the phantom of Miss Ponsonby's pretty companion still sat by the fire, now sunk low and smouldering, to call and rebuke Dandy, who was scratching with mistaken zeal at the parlour wainscot for a purely ideal rat—in fact, the ghost of the one that escaped in the yard from George's broom. A dash Dandy made at some white object on the hearth-rug, which he tossed about in absurd fury, and eventually wound madly round his body, drew the doctor's attention to three or four little dark specks on the carpet, which he stooped and picked up. They were violets that had been dropped by Lilly when she was filling the cluster of five little white parian Greek vases, which stood in the centre of the round table. The object that so teased, distracted, and delighted Dandy was the strip cut off one of the white frills that stood up like shirt-collars round the little flowers that had been deluded into mistaking October for April. Man, especially young man, as has been often observed, is a strange, irrational animal, else why should the young doctor have kissed the stray violets and then thrust them hastily into his waistcoat-pocket with as guilty an air as if he had committed felony. No doubt the mysterious thief, whoever he might be, who had purloined Miss Ponsonby's ten pounds, had been twice as bold in his abstraction. Yet, after all, what harm in keeping the violets in remembrance of a pretty and interesting face that he might not see more than once or twice again? None, of course, that was the utter absurdity of it; and why did a big man like that blush as he whistled for Dandy, let himself out, and slammed the black, heavy-panelled door after him as quietly as it would let him?

The same moon, but now clear and keen as a golden sickle. The wind was fresher, and was busy sweeping the sky free of cloud. Even the two sour spinster trees looked more cheerful, and were whispering together in a low voice, and nodding their heads at the same moment like half-sleepy gossips at "the latter end of a sea-coal fire." A fanciful person might have almost supposed that, as friends of the family, they were discussing together the loss of Miss Ponsonby's ten pounds. The old bay-trees guarding the steps, standing as much on their respectability as ever, and with leaves glittering like silver, rustled in their stiff, old-fashioned way as Frank Tresham passed, as if to wish him a good evening. It was evidently meant well, and so Frank took it. As he walked home he thought over the mysterious robbery, and in his mind at once acquitted the little servant-girl. "If burglars ever carry off that amiable old lady's plate-chest," he thought to himself, "I believe she would go stark staring mad. I have seen many odd faces in my time," he went on in his reverie, "but I never saw anything odder than the look that detestable lady's-maid gave me when she described Gumboge's medicine. I should almost have imagined she was fond of laudanum herself. I don't like that woman—wonder if *she* collared the ten-pound note? Not unlikely, repeated a text the next moment perhaps, and will give sixpence on Sunday at the chapel to the Timbuctoo mission." That pretty niece, too, he thought, was, after all, the very companion that he had sketched in such odious colours. But just then a singular phenomenon disturbed Frank Tresham's reverie, for out of one of those deep blue spaces in the sky the moon suddenly launched forth, and in the glory of the thin cloud into which it sailed there appeared for a moment a face as like Lilly Dampier's as two peas. An instant after the same vision reappeared in the moonlight that gleamed out on a garden wall. After all, it was a pleasant spectre by which to be temporarily haunted.

When Frank got home the pheasant was still warm, but it was only a wreck of its former greatness. Such are the sacrifices which life demands of us. Nevertheless, our hero ate nearly all the bird without a grumble, for he was young and eupeptic, and the beautiful and beatific vision had by no means taken away his appetite. Afterwards he lit his pipe, put his feet on the hob, and looked at those violets which he had picked up on Miss Ponsonby's hearth-

rug, but he did not throw them into the fire.

CHAPTER IV. THE EARWIG.

"The Whole Duty of Man" is a very admirable theological work, but when it comes to reading it two hours together in a hot room, it is perhaps apt to produce in the reader a longing for fresh air, and any sunshine there may be about.

"Oh, I am so tired, Mercy, of reading," said Lilly, the forenoon after the robbery, as she ran into the parlour where Mercy was dusting. Lilly looked as buoyant and beautiful as if she had been among May flowers all the morning; "it's very wicked of me I know, but that Duty of Man is so much alike, I always seem reading the same page."

"To me, miss, it seems always very beautiful, and very 'oly. 'Ours and 'ours I used to sit reading it to poor dear Mrs. Baldock, who is now a saint, if there ever was a saint. The very gown I wear now, Miss Lilly, was hers. Ah! that was a loss. She was always giving, Ah! if there was only more like her this would be a very different world."

A good deal of Mercy's conversation consisted of groans and ejaculations, unless she was scolding or running any one down, then and then alone she kept strictly to business. With some sort of respect for Mercy's fidelity, this lugubrious tone did not harmonise with Lilly's disposition that bright morning, and she laughed out from very merriment of heart, and with shameful indifference to the merits of the late lamented Mrs. Baldock. Mercy gave a sanctimonious sigh, lamenting that youth and happiness should be allowed to outrage the world in their momentary forgetfulness of death and misery.

"Ah! you're very young, miss," she said; "and you haven't found yet that everything is vanity. It would be better for you if you had—much better, but then *some* people can't abide good things or good people, and this world's their idol and always will be."

"My idols, just now, are sunshine, liberty, and happiness, Mercy. The religion I was taught makes people happy, and they don't hate the sunshine because it is not so gloomy as their own minds. I dare say you think I'm wicked because I don't always play hymn tunes, and because I enjoy dancing. Did you ever dance, Mercy?"

Mercy groaned, said she hoped she never had, and implied that such rhythmical gymnastics were only fit for lost persons, who were visibly going very much downwards—very much so.

Lilly laughed louder than ever at this outburst, and, as she did so, chirped to a pet goldfinch in a cage by the window, whom she called Goldy, and fed with a lump of sugar, placed between two of the prettiest cherry lips in the world. Just then Miss Ponsonby's bell rang sharply and fretfully.

"There she is again," said Mercy, by no means in a tone of Christian patience—"ring, ring, ring—nothing but ring. Ah, Miss Lilly, I sometimes think it would be a mercy if missus was taken."

"Oh, Mercy, how very wicked of you!"

"You know you think so too, Miss Dampier, only you don't like to say so."

"What, lose dear aunt? No; I love her too much."

"Dear aunt!" said Mercy, scornfully, with the tone of a reproachful accomplice; "who makes a slave of you, and keeps you here in a sort of prison, and scolds and fidgets you about all day. I say again, it will be a blessed day when the black coach comes for her."

"Don't smile like that, Mercy; you look quite cruel. What's the matter with you, Mercy, this morning? No wonder you don't like hearing me laugh, or seeing me happy. You're put out to-day. I never heard you talk like this before. You used to be always praising aunt."

"I only did that because you did so. I'm worn out with her lately. Who can like being called up before daybreak, and watched and nagged at? It is too much for flesh and blood to bear. I know it's sinful not to bear wot's good for us. There she is again. There, let her ring. I only wish she had to wait on herself for a day. That'd teach her. But it's all my wicked, unregenerate temper, Miss Lilly, I know, and you mustn't think anything of it. It's a trial; but it's good for me, no doubt, and I'll try and think so."

Thus the odious woman, finding the sudden removal of her mask had disgusted Lilly, who had none to withdraw, slipped it clumsily on again.

"I've only an hour to be away, Mercy," said Lilly, "and I mustn't stop talking any longer, for I'm squandering my sunshine. Mind aunt has her boiled chicken exactly at one." And Lilly ran off singing, rather shocked at the contrast between Mercy's real and assumed manner.

"I'll see to it," said Mercy, her sallow eyes turning yellower, as Lilly's mauve locket-ribbon fluttered round the corner of the passage that led into the garden, "and I'll see that I put a spoke in your wheel, too, carnying and wheedling to get missus's money, and to rob me of what I might have had. Well, I know I am down in her will, and that's a blessed comfort, after sore trials and heavy burdens, almost heavier than one can bear. Smooth-faced, wheedling minx! despising sound doctrine, and turning up her nose at me. I'll teach her. There the old cat is, worretting again at the bell. Ugh! I wish I'd the mixing of her medicine."

And full of bitter resolves, Mercy went, with her face set to do evil, to pour some leprous distilment in her mistress's ear. The old lady was sitting at her desk, feebly turning over a bundle of faded-looking letters, tied round with pale ribbon, that had once been blue.

"No one attends to me," she said, querulously. "I've been ringing the bell for full half an hour. Here I am left alone, and I suppose if I was found dead up here no one but you, Mercy, would give me even a thought. Ah! what it is to be old!"

"I told Miss Lilly it was very unfeeling of her to go running out and leaving you all alone, but she doesn't care, she said, so high and mighty as you like; she wasn't going to be locked up all day in a house that was like a jail. I'm afraid, ma'am, Miss Dampier isn't as contented as when she first came."

"But she *must* be contented, and she *shall* be contented," said the old lady, sharply, poking the fire with angry petulance; "beggars mustn't be choosers. She must do as I like. I'll not be ruled by a chit like her. Did I not give her a home when no one else would?"

"You are always kind, and so I told her, and it's her duty to do all she can, and to sacrifice her small likings, and to turn away from worldly pleasures that signify nothing; but these young people, brought into better circumstances than they have a right to expect, forget all that, and telling them does no kind of good."

"And what did the inspector say this morning?"—the old lady did not choose to enter further into her feelings about Lilly—"did he think any one had got in by the back windows?"

"No, ma'am; he said there were no foot-prints on the flower-bed, and he thought it must have been done by some one in the house—some work-person who knew the way, or some——"

"Some what? Why don't you speak out?" broke forth the irritable old lady, "standing there screwing up your eyes and mouth as if you were keeping something back. What did the man say? I don't want texts and jargon from your chapel sermons. What did he say? You have been a faithful servant to me, Mercy, for now ten years, and you know I have not forgotten you in my will. You are bound to keep no secrets from me. Did you ask him to search Susan's box?"

"Yes, ma'am, but he refused; he said there was no case against Susan at present. If she was found in a week or so to dress finer, or have any lover who had been seen about the place, then it would be different. He would have his eye on her, he said, but he believed from what he saw there was no harm at all in the girl. If the mother, he said, hadn't such a high character, he might have suspected her. Altogether, he said it was a matter he would not like to give any opinion upon for the present."

"Mercy, you are equivocating; you are not telling me the whole truth. You said this man told you he thought the robbery must have been done by some one in the house or some—— My memory, you see, is very good. What did you mean?"

Mercy was silent for a moment. Then her malign eyes fell on Lilly's work-basket, brimming with coloured wools, that lay on the table by the fire. "If you please, ma'am, I'd rather not say—perhaps I misunderstood him—you'd better see him yourself."

"What *does* the woman mean?" thought Miss Ponsonby. "She is faithful I know." Then a horrible suspicion flashed through her mind.

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THE ROSE AND THE KEY.

CHAPTER XI. ROYDON.

NEXT day, about noon, the young lady, with an embrace, and a little shower of kisses, took a loving farewell of her cousin, stepped into a fly, with her boxes on the roof, and, with a sad heart, began her journey homeward.

It was a good way, some twenty miles and upwards. She had borrowed Miss Max's novel, grew tired of it a dozen times, and resumed it as often, and as she neared home, with the restlessness that accompanies the conclusion of a journey, she threw her book on the opposite cushion, and looked out of the window, greeting, as it were, the familiar objects that in succession presented themselves to view.

Now they are passing the windmill on the little hillock overlooking the road. The day is sultry. There is not a breath to stir its sails, and the great arms stand bare and motionless. Mill and hillock glide backward, and are gone.

The road descends a little. They are between files of old elms. It grows broader; there stands the old village tree, with a rude wooden bench encircling its trunk. The time-honoured tree sails back, and is lost, and quaint old diamond-latticed houses float into view, and pass. Here and there a familiar face is seen at door or window, or peeping from the shade over the hatch; and the girl, from the fly-window, nods and smiles. They are now midway in the quiet little street, but they have not yet reached the home that she loves not.

At the other side are the stained walls of an antique church; the gilded vane, the grey tombstones, spread over the thick emerald grass, and the yew-tree, go slanting off, hurry-scurry, as the fly-wheels whirl, by a wide circuit, through the piers of a great iron gate, which has just given egress to an old-fashioned family coach.

It is going the other way. It does not pass her. It and its liveried footmen are fast getting into perspective under the boughs of the trees that line the road. Through the window of the fly, as it turns, she has a momentary peep.

"Brown and gold," she says, as listlessly she leans back again in her humble conveyance. "The Tinterns. And so here I am, a black sheep, a scamp, and a reprobate, come home again, as curses do!"

There was not much remorse, but a good deal of bitterness in her tone, and the girl yawned, with her finger-tips to her lips, and looked for a moment a little peevish.

There is what is termed technically an "approach" to the house up to which she is driving, a serpentine road, two miles long at least, through a wooded demesne. But, wisely, the old owner of Roydon, when consulting his new lights, and laying out, according to picturesque principles, the modern approach, would not allow them to obliterate or alter the old avenue of the mansion—broad and straight, something more than a quarter of a mile long, with a double line of trees at each side, wide enough apart to admit the entire front of the building.

It is up this broad, straight avenue she is driving now.

A lazy man, with a mind at ease, entering here for the first time, looking down the solemn lines of enormous boughs to the old-world glories that close the perspective, escaping from the vulgar world

of dust and rattle into shorn grass and clear, silent air, and the luxurious and melancholy grandeur of all that surrounds him, might fancy himself in the "delicious land" once visited by the enchanted Sir Jeofry.

In the distance rises a grand Elizabethan structure — broad, florid, built of white stone, yellowed and many-tinted by time. A vague effect fills the eye of pinnacles and bell-mouthed chimneys, and curved and corniced gables, balustrades, a front variously indented and projecting; multitudes of stone-shafted windows, deep-curved scrolls, and heraldic shields and supporters; a broad flight of steps, and then another balustrade running at both sides the whole length of the base. All this rises before her, with its peculiar combination of richness, lightness, and solidity, basking drowsily in the summer sun.

As you approach, you discern a wide court-yard in front, with a second line of balustrade nearer to you.

On the summit of this, here and there, are peacocks sunning themselves, some white, others plumed in their proper gold and purple. They nod their crested heads as they prune their plumage, and hang their long tails to the grass, disturbing the slumbrous air, now and then, with a discordant scream.

As you draw nearer still, before you enter the court, two oblong ponds reveal their spacious waters, at the right and the left; you may hear the shower of the fountains playing in the middle, snowy coronals of water-lilies are floating near their banks, and swans are grandly gliding round and up and down.

Now the homely "fly" is in the court-yard. A great Russian dog lies sunning himself on the dazzling gravel, near the steps, and whacks the ground twice or thrice with his tail, in lazy recognition, as he sees the young lady look from the window of her homely vehicle.

"I suppose that is the way of the world, Bevis," she says; "you know whom to get up for."

Her attention is arrested by a carriage waiting a little way from the steps.

"That's the dean," comments the young lady as she sees that very neat equipage, at the window of which a tall footman, in light blue and gold livery, with flowered hair, is standing. He has just descended the broad flight of steps under the great shield which overhangs the door, and which displays in high relief all the heraldic insignia of that branch of the Vernons. He is delivering a message from Lady Vernon — Barbara Vernon—I give you the christian name of this famous widow at once, as it is mentioned often in the sequel—to an old lady sitting in the carriage.

Old Miss Wyvel, the dean's sister, as usual, with her feet on a pan of hot water, sits in the carriage reading her novel, and nursing her rheumatism, while her brother, the dean, makes his visit, with an apology from her for not coming in.

"We'll not mind Miss Wyvel this time. She'll be all the happier that I don't disturb her, and so shall I."

Another tall footman, seeing who is in the fly, descends the broad steps quickly, and opens the door.

"The Dean of Chartry is here?" inquires the young lady. "How long has he been here?"

"About ten minutes, please, miss."

"Any other visitor?"

"No one, miss, at present, please."

"Where is her ladyship?"

"In the library, please, miss."

"Will you tell somebody, please, to tell my maid that I want her in my room?" said the young lady.

And she ran up the steps lightly, and entered the great hall. It runs back into space, almost into darkness, with oak panelled walls and tall pictures. She turned to the right, where the broad oak staircase ascends.

Up she runs. There are more portraits in this house, one must suppose, than the owners well know what to do with, for you can hardly turn a corner without meeting a gentleman with rosettes in his shoes, a ruff round his neck, and a rapier by his side, or a lady in the toilet of Queen Elizabeth. All ages, indeed, of English costume, from the court of Harry the Eighth down to George the Second, are represented here; and, I suspect, there is now not a soul on earth who could tell you the names of all these magnificos and high dames, who are fain to lurk behind corners, or stand in their frames, with their backs against the walls of galleries, passed, back and forward, by gabbling moderns, who don't care twopence about them or their finery.

Off one of these galleries the young lady enters her own room—stately, comfortable, luxurious—looks around with a good-natured recognition, and has hardly begun to take off her dusty things, and prepare to make her toilet, when her maid passes in through the dressing-room door, smiling.

CHAPTER XII. BARBARA VERNON.

By no means old is this maid. Some six-and-thirty years, perhaps. She has carried Maud in her arms when she was a little thing, and dressed her; sat by her bed and told her fairy-tales in the nursery.

"Welcome home, Miss Maud," smiles Jones.

"And how have you been?" says the young lady, taking her by the hand, and kissing her affectionately on one cheek and the other. "As for me, I've been flourishing. I almost think, old Jones, if I had only had you with me, I should never have come back again."

"La, miss, how you talk!"

"I've been leading a wild, free life. Did you ever see so much dust, Jones, on any human being?"

"Indeed, you are in a pickle, miss. Charles said you came in a fly with one horse. I wonder her ladyship did not send a carriage to Wybourne to meet you."

"Mamma has other things and people to think about," said the young lady, a little bitterly. "But I dare say if I had asked I should have had it; though, indeed, I shouldn't have liked it."

"Your hand's all sunburnt, miss."

"I've been sketching; and I never could sketch with a glove on."

"Well, dear me, it *was* a fancy going in these queer things! Why, I would not be seen in such things myself, miss, much less you. You'd best bundle off that dress, miss, as quick as you can. La! it is thick with dust. Phiew!"

"Help me, Jones, help me." And as she continued her toilet she asked: "Is mamma yet talking of making her usual journey?"

"Not a word, miss, of any one stirring yet. Norris would know. She has not heard nothing."

"The Tinterns' carriage was here to-day—I passed it at the gate. Do you know who called?"

"Mr. Tintern and Mrs. They was here nigh half an hour. Leave them alone for 'aving their eyes about 'em, miss. There ain't a tack druv in the house, or a slate loose, but it's known down at the Grange before it's noticed here."

"I think, Jones, they reckon upon—don't pull my hair." By this time she was sitting in her dressing-gown before the glass, with her dark, golden-brown hair hanging over her shoulders in such profusion, that it seemed incredible how such masses could find growing room in one little head. Jones was brushing out its folds.

"I'm not pulling it, indeed, miss," she protested.

"Yes, you were, Jones. Don't ever contradict me. Has either of my special horrors—Mr. Smelt—he's the clergyman or dissenter, something in black, the sleek fat man that comes so often—has he been here since?"

"He may 'ave, miss; but——"

"But you don't know. Well, the other—Doctor Malkin?"

"Oh, dear yes, miss. He was here, please, on Friday last."

"You're sure?"

"Yes, miss, please. Her ladyship sent for me to the shield room. She only asked whether I could remember for certain, miss, what day you were to return 'ome to Wybourne with Miss Medwyn."

"Well?"

"Well, miss, she had it down in a book, and read it to me, and I said 'twas right. You said early—the seventeenth."

"And did she say anything more?"

"No, please, miss, nothing more. Only she said, 'That's all, you need not wait.'"

"And what about Doctor Malkin?"

"He was showed in, miss, please, just as I was going out. And I heard her order Edward not to let any visitor in; and that was all, please."

"Do you know the name of this place, parish, and county, Jones?" says the young lady, carelessly.

"Well, I ought to by this time, miss," laughs Jones.

"I don't think you do. The name of this place is Bœotia, and it is famous for its dulness, and Doctor Malkin is one of the six inhabitants who can think and talk a little. He is an agreeable man, and—put a pin there—an unpleasant-looking man. I like talking to him; but I think, on the whole, I should not be sorry if he were laid in the Red Sea, as poor nurse Barnwell used to say. What do you think of him?"

"That is a gentleman, Heaven forgive me, I can't abide, miss," answered Jones. "I hate his face. I always feel in low spirits after I see it."

"Well, anything more?" continues Miss Maud. "When are the people coming to hear grandpapa's will read?"

"To-morrow, I believe, miss. But, as yet, Mr. Eccles has not got no orders about it. He said so after dinner in the 'ouse-keeper's room yesterday."

"And is there anything going to be—a tea and plum-cake for the school-children, or a meeting of missionaries, or anything of any kind?"

"Nothing, miss, please, as I 'ave heard of, but——"

"You'll knock down that china, Jones."

"What, miss?"

"My ring—my Dresden dancers."

"Oh! The little man and woman with one arm akimbo and the other up. I saw them all the time."

"Well, take great care. I'm sure I shall kill you if you break them. You were going to tell me there is nothing going to be, except something—what is it?"

"Oh! I know; yes, miss, the consecke-ration of the monument in the church. That will be to-morrow evening, miss."

"Oh! Really? Well, that *was* a whim! Give me those ear-rings. No, *not* those—the others; not those either. Don't you see the little ones. Thanks. Yes. I must run down and see mamma, I suppose, though I'm very sure she doesn't care if she did not see my face for a year, or—for ever."

"La, miss! you must not talk like that. Your mamma's a very religious lady—the most so, as every one knows, in the county—I might say in all England—and it's just her way; the same with every one, a little bit high and distant like; but it ain't fit, miss, you should say that."

"No, Jones, we can't agree, mamma and I. Give me that small enamel brooch—the little one with the lady's head set in gold. Thanks. She does not like me"—the young lady was standing before the glass, and I dare say was well pleased, for she looked splendidly handsome—"and the reason is just this, every one else flatters her. You and all the other sneaks. I never do, although I am sometimes a little afraid of her like the rest. I'm nervous, I don't know why; but it's not cowardice. I never flatter her."

"No, miss, it ain't that; it's only you don't try her. You won't go the right way about it."

"There's no use, Jones—you only vex me. I've often felt that I would give the world to throw my arms about her neck and kiss her; but somehow I can't; she won't let me. Perhaps she tries; but she can't love me; and so it always was, as far back as I can remember, and so it will always be, and I've made up my mind to it; it can't be helped."

So Miss Maud Vernon walked along the gallery, and went down the broad stairs, passing many ancestors who stood by, at the right and the left, against the wall, as she did so, and singing low to herself as she went, with a clear and rich voice, an Italian air quite new to the solemn people in the picture-frames, at whom she looked listlessly, thinking neither of them nor of her song as she passed by.

Mr. Tarpey, the groom of the chambers, was fussing with the decorations of the hall as she passed.

"Can you tell me where her ladyship is?" she inquired.

"Her ladyship, I think, is still in the library. Please, shall I see, miss?"

"Don't mind. I'll try myself. Is her ladyship alone?"

"I think so, miss."

He crossed the hall, and opened the second door from the great entrance, which stood wide open, in this sultry weather, by Lady Vernon's command, the two tall foot-men, in their blue and gold liveries, keeping guard there.

Maud glanced through the open hall-door as she crossed the hall; she would have been rather pleased to see a carriage approaching; she did not care for a very long interview with her mother; but there was no sign of a visitor in sight.

"Thanks, I'll go alone," she said, dispensing with the escort of Mr. Tarpey; and passing through two spacious rooms, she reached the door of the library. Lady Vernon treated that apartment as her private cabinet, and from her childhood Maud had been accustomed to respect it.

Maud has no liking for the coming interview. She would, now, have liked to put it off, and as she crosses the Turkey carpet that muffles her tread, her step slackens. She stops at the door and raises her hand to knock, but she doesn't knock; she hesitates; she has a great mind to turn back, and wait till her mother sends for her. But, perhaps, that would not do. She has been at home nearly an hour, and it is time she should ask Lady Vernon how she does.

She knocks at the door, and hears a clear voice call "Come in."

She turns the handle accordingly, and steps into a spacious room, hung with gilded leather; the blinds are down, the sun by this time shining on this side of the house, and a mellow, cathedral-like dim-ness prevails. There are three or four an-tique bookcases, carved in ponderous relief, through the leaves and scrolls of which are

grinning grotesque and ugly faces, rich with a cynical Gothic fancy, and overhung by fantastic cornices, crowned with the heraldic shield and supporters of the Vernons. They are stored with gilded volumes; portraits hang here, as in other parts of this rich old house, and cold marble busts gleam on pedestals from the corners.

Sitting at a table in the middle of this room is a very handsome woman of forty years or upwards, with skin smooth as ivory, and jet-black hair, divided in the middle, and brought down over her white temples and small pretty ears smoothly in the simple classic fashion, now out of date. Her finely pencilled black eyebrows, and her features with a classic elegance of outline, carry an expression of cold hauteur. Her slight embonpoint becomes her grave but rich dress, which is that of a woman of rank and wealth, by no means indifferent to the impression produced by externals.

This lady, with one handsome foot upon a stool, and a desk before her, is in a leisurely way writing a letter, over which she bends just the least thing in the world. Her pose is decidedly elegant.

The lady glances slightly toward the door. Her large grey eyes, under their long lashes, rest for a moment on her daughter. She does not smile; the pen is still in her fingers. She says, simply, in her clear and rather sweet tones, "Oh, Maud? I will speak to you in a few minutes, when I have put this into its envelope. Won't you sit down?" And so she continues to write.

The young lady flashes back a rather fiery glance in return for this cool welcome, and does not sit down, but walks instead, with a quick step, to the window, pulls the blind aside, and looks out perseveringly.

CHAPTER XIII. MOTHER AND DAUGHTER.

Lady Vernon having enclosed and addressed her letter, added it to the little pack of about six others at her left. Then looking up, she said:

"So, you are quite well, Maud, and you arrived at a quarter past three?"

"Quite well, mamma, thanks. I suppose it was about that time; and I hope you are very well."

"I am well, thanks; and I wished to mention that when you, as you told me, fixed the seventeenth for your return to the Hermitage with Maximilla Medwyn, I was under a mistake, and did not see, till too late, that the seventeenth would be Sunday; and I should not have given my sanction to your travelling for pleasure on Sunday. I wished to mention that particularly. I told Maximilla I should be happy to receive her any day this week. Is she coming do you know?"

"She would have come with me this morning, but she had so much to say to her servants, and so many things to arrange, that she could not leave home till after dinner at soonest, so she hopes to be here at ten to-night; and if anything should happen to prevent her, you are to have a note, by post, in the morning."

"She will be in time, at all events, for the bishop's sermon to-morrow," says Lady Vernon. "The monument will be uncovered at five o'clock. The bishop arrives at six. He has to consecrate the new church at Eastover, before he comes here, and then he goes on, after his sermon, to Wardlake, for the evening meeting of the church missions."

Miss Vernon is hardly so much interested in all this as her mother is, although even she recites the programme a little dryly. But dry as is her recital, it is not often that she volunteers so much information to her daughter.

"And what can the bishop have to say about the monument, to lead him so much out of his way, poor old man?"

"The bishop seems to think that his having been the dearest friend that Mr. Howard had on earth, constitutes some little claim upon him," says Lady Vernon, haughtily, in a cold tone, and with her fine grey eyes fixed on her daughter.

"Oh! I did not know," says Maud, a little apologetically.

"No, of course you did not; you seldom do know, or care to know, anything that interests me," says the elder lady, with her fine brows a little higher.

Maud coloured suddenly, with an impatient movement of her head. She was not sitting down, only standing near the table, drumming on it with her finger-tops, and she felt for a moment as if she could have stamped.

She answered, however, without any show of excitement except in her brilliant colour and eyes.

"I did not know, mamma, that this monument to Mr. Howard interested you particularly."

"No, not particularly," said handsome Lady Vernon, sternly, for she was one of those persons who don't brook contradiction, and who interpret discussion as a

contradiction. "Mr. Howard was the best vicar we ever had here, or ever shall have; and, in his way, a benefactor to this parish. The bishop, who admired and loved him, as much as one man could another, suggested that for such a man, in the field of his labours, having lain in his grave more than a score of years unrecorded by a single line, it was time that a monument should be raised. He wished a beautiful one, and so I believe it is. His name is first in the list of subscribers, and it is his idea, and it is he who has taken a lead in it; and, therefore, though interested, I am not particularly interested in the personal degree which your emphasis would imply."

"Well, all I can say is, I'm very unlucky, mamma."

"I think you are unlucky," replied her mother, coldly, turning her head slowly away, and looking at the pendule over the chimney.

"Have you anything to ask me, Maud?" inquired Lady Vernon, after a little interval.

"Nothing, thanks, mamma," said Maud, with her head a little high. "I'm afraid I have bored you coming in when you were busy. But having been away ten days, I thought it would have been wrong, or at least odd, if I had not come to see you to ask you how you were."

"So it would," said Lady Vernon. "Will you touch the bell?"

She did so.

"Well, mamma, I suppose there's nothing more?"

"Nothing, Maud."

Maud's heart swelled with bitterness as she left the room, and shut the door gently.

"No father, no mother, no near relation!" she thought, impetuously. "I love Cousin Max better than fifty such mammas. There are girls who would hate her. But I can't. Why am I cursed with this cruel yearning for her love? And she can't love me—she won't have my love. I think she wishes me to hate her."

When Maud was a little thing, as far back as she could remember, her idea of a "mamma" was an embodiment of power, and something to be afraid of. Seldom seen except when the spirited little girl became unmanageable; then there would be a rustling of silk and a flutter of lace in the nursery, and the handsome figure, the proud still face and large grey eyes were before her. This phantom instantly cowed her. It always looked severe, and never smiled, and its sweet cold tones were dreadful. The child's instinct could see dislike, hidden from maturer observers, in those fine eyes, and never heard a tender note in that harmonious voice.

Miss Maud passed out through the suite of rooms, and encountered Lady Vernon's footman going in to take her letters.

In the hall, serious Mr. Eccles, the gentleman-like butler, was passing upon his business with the quiet importance and gravity of office.

The young lady had a word to say.

"Is any one expected to dinner to-day?"

"Yes, miss—five; the vicar and Mrs. Foljambe; his curate, the Reverend Mr. Doody; and Mr. Puntle and Doctor Malkin. There was an invitation for Captain Bamme; but he is absent on militia business, and it is thought not probable, miss, he will return in time."

Anything was better than a tête-à-tête with Lady Vernon; a situation which Lady Vernon herself seemed to deprecate as strongly as her daughter, for it did not occur usually six times in a year.

POPULAR AMERICAN PHRASES.

In a new country peopled by an old race, with new physical surroundings, new political struggles, and new social ideas, it is natural that new words and phrases, and new metaphors, should creep into the old language. This has occurred in the United States, where the people not only speak the best of English when they please—and sometimes boast of the fact—but superadd, when they are in the humour, a rich and racy vocabulary which is so entirely their own as seldom to be intelligible to Englishmen without an explanation. The old and settled states of New England, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and generally of the thirteen original colonies which were engaged in the War of Independence, do not coin many new words and phrases in our day, though they sometimes make an effort in that direction. The great mass of the most characteristic and original neologisms come from the South-Western and Western States, which are as yet but sparsely peopled, and in which the settlers have to fight against the wilderness, and often against its inhabitants, both four-footed and two-footed, if they would maintain their ground. These men look upon nature face to face. They confront hardships and difficulties every day of their lives, though only to overcome and subdue

them; and they feel as they do so that they are laying the solid foundations of new empires for their sons and grandsons. A little pride and magniloquence may therefore be forgiven them. The expressions which they invent, and the metaphors which they employ, drawn from their personal experience of men and things, and from the well of their own untutored genius, are not only full of a peculiar humour, but of common sense and worldly wisdom. The words are not always elegant, but they are generally forcible. In the invention of epithets and nicknames for political friends and opponents they are particularly happy. Dr. Webster, the lexicographer, in reference to this peculiarity, very truly says: "We rarely find a new word introduced into the language which is entirely useless. The use of new terms is dictated by necessity or utility; sometimes to express shades of difference in signification, for which the language did not supply a suitable term; sometimes to express a combination of ideas by a single word, which otherwise would require a circumlocution. These benefits, which are often perceived instinctively, as it were, by a nation, recommend such words to common use, till the cavils of critics are silenced by the weight of authority."

I do not propose to discuss the single words which the language owes to the peculiarities and eccentricities of American life, or the vulgarities or diversities of pronunciation which distinguish the English language in America from the English spoken at home (English at home has a plentiful stock of vulgarisms of indigenous growth to answer for to the philologist and grammarian), but the phrases and the metaphors which are purely American, and which are never likely to become naturalised in the Old World. Agriculture, commerce, and politics, all carried on in America under conditions different from those which they present in Great Britain, are the three great sources whence these phrases and metaphors are derived, and each of these show the steady and continually growing and expanding English language in a new light of wit, of humour, or of a development, which may seem vulgar to the present age, but which is likely to fix itself securely into the next, to lead to new developments in its turn, irrespective of the opposition of grammarians and purists, who forget that language is made for man and not man for language.

In a fenced and enclosed country such as England, a direct line between two places, one of which cannot be seen from the other on account of the enclosures, is said to be a line "as the crow flies." In America such a line is called "a bee line," and sometimes an "air line." Bees, after having laden themselves with honey, have been observed always to fly back to the hive in a direct line, which is not always the case with crows in their flight. The phrase is shorter and better than our English equivalent. "Sinners," says Dow in his Lay Sermons, "you are making a bee line from time to eternity, and what you have once passed over you will never pass again." Another quotation shows the humorous aspect of the phrase. "The sweetened whisky I had drank," says the author of the Americans at Home, "made me so powerful thick-legged, that when I started to walk, my track wasn't anything like a bee line."

The swarming of bees has given rise to several phrases that savour of a new country, and of the help that settlers are always ready to afford one another in the backwoods. When a new immigrant arrives in the Far West, the neighbouring settlers, perhaps for twenty or fifty miles distant, unite with their teams, cut down the forest trees, and build him up a log-house in a single day. This swarm of assistance is called "a raising bee." The ladies also have swarms of similar kind, such as "the quilting bees," when the young women assemble, and in an afternoon will make a quilt for the new comers. "Apple bees" take place in the cider-making time, when the neighbours help to gather the apples and prepare them either for drying or for the vat, and make the occasion an excuse for merry-making.

In America all coleopterous insects are called "bugs," where in England they would be called beetles. The word has, consequently, not the offensive sense that it has with us, and the disgusting insect to which it is applied at home has the prefix "bed" to distinguish it from all other coleoptera. The fire-fly, that flits about so picturesquely in the hot summer evenings and nights, is called "the lightning bug." To be called a "big bug" is to be recognised as a person of note or consequence. "Miss Savage is a big bug," says the writer of the Widow Bedott's papers; "she's got more money than almost anybody else in town." Sam Slick in England, talking of a visit to the House of Lords, says, "We'll go to the Lords' House—I don't mean the

Meeting House—but the place where the nobles meet, pick out the big bugs, and see what stuff they are made of." "The free and easy manner in which Sir Robert Peel described some of the big bugs at Moscow has got him into difficulty."—New York Times.

Bunkum, or more properly Buncombe, is a useful word which England has borrowed from America, and which bids fair to be naturalised among us. The origin of the phrase, talking Buncombe, or talking for Buncombe, is related in Wheeler's History of North Carolina. "Several years ago the member in Congress for the district of Buncombe rose to address the House, without any extraordinary gifts either in manner or in matter to interest the audience. Many members arose and left the hall. Very naïvely he told those who remained that they might go also, as he should speak for some time, but was only speaking for Buncombe." The word has also come to signify what is sometimes called bosh. "Our people," says Sam Slick in Human Nature, "talk a great deal of nonsense about emancipation, but they know it's all Buncombe." In England the parliamentary reporters have the power to deprive Buncombe in either House of all its power to reach the place for which it is intended, by the simple plan of refusing to make a note of it. But no such power exists in the United States; and he who speaks for Buncombe, though he cannot oblige the House to listen to him, can compel the official reporters of the House to take down his words, and can compel the Congressional Globe, or the Standard of Washington, to print them at the expense of the country. No wonder that Buncombe is a greater nuisance in America than it is likely to be in England.

"Dead-head" is another phrase which might be advantageously adopted at home. It signifies a person who gets free admission to theatres, concerts, and other places of public amusement, and who procures free passes for railway and steam-boat travelling.

"To be death" on a thing, is to do the thing well, to be a good hand at it; to do anything thoroughly. "Do you know Chunkey? He was raised in Mississippi, and is death on bars (bears)." The quack doctor could not manage the whooping-cough, but he was "death on fits."

"Dyed in the wool," thorough, ingrained, is in vulgar parlance something that will wash and not lose colour; as, "He's an out-and-out good fellow: dyed in the wool." "General Taylor is a democrat dyed in the wool," or a democrat of the Jeffersonian colour.

"To be on the fence," is a political phrase, applied to a man who has not quite made up his mind for which side he will vote, or who will vote according to his interest:

> Every fool knows that a man represents
> Not the fellows that sent him, but those on the fence,
> Impartially ready to jump either side.
> LOWELL, The Biglow Papers.

"To give a man fits," or "to give a man Jessie," that is, to punish a man so severely by tongue, or pen, or cow-hide, or the bare fist, as to throw him into a paroxysm of rage and fear. "To give a man particular fits," or "particular Jessie," is the comparative of the original positive, the ne plus ultra of chastisement, mental and physical. "I go in for Bill Sykes, because he runs into our machine; but he mustn't come fooling around my gal, or I'll give him fits." — A Glance at New York, Bartlett.

"Fizzle," to burn dull like wet gunpowder; to make a ridiculous or egregious failure. "To fizzle out," to make a complete failure. "The factions and revolutionary action of the fifteen (senators) has interrupted the regular business of the senate, disgraced the actors, and fizzled out."—Cincinnati Gazette. "You never get tired of a good horse, he doesn't fizzle out." — Sam Slick. "To make a blue fizzle," is to make a melancholy or lugubrious failure.

"To put the foot down," to be very decided in a course of action. The late President Lincoln was continually represented by the Northern papers as "putting his foot down" for the removal of General M'Clellan or General Hooker, or for the abolition of slavery, or for some other object, popular at the time.

"To fly off the handle," to break a promise, suggested by the accident that sometimes occurs to a hatchet or an axe, when the blade flies off and leaves the useless handle in the grasp. "Now and then some of the girls would promise, and then fly off the handle."—Bartlett. The phrase also means to lose temper, and become unreasonably excited to wrath.

"To drive a straight furrow;" a metaphor derived from the plough, signifying to go right about your business, to be truthful and honest, and to indulge in no shams or false pretences.

"To go the big figure," to do things in

a magnificent manner; on a large scale. "To go the whole figure," to go to the fullest extent in a speculation or an enterprise. "Go the whole figure for religious liberty; it has no meaning here where all are free; but it's a cant word and sounds well."—Sam Slick "Our senators go the big figure on oysters and whisky-punch."—Bartlett's Dictionary of Americanisms. "To go the whole hog," or "to go the entire animal," is another vulgarism of the same species which is sometimes heard in England.

"Gone coon," "a gone goose," "a gone gander," "a gone gosling," "a gonner," are varieties of a phrase that was first brought into popularity by the story of a Colonel Scott, a Western hunter, whose aim with the rifle was so unerring, that a racoon (a coon) upon a tree, at which he was going to fire, surrendered at discretion, after a short parley. "Are you Colonel Scott?" "Yes." "The famous Colonel Scott?" "Yes, so people say." "Don't fire, Colonel, I give in, I'm a gone coon!" In the West a hopelessly bad debt is called a "gonner," something that is gone beyond the chance of recovery.

"Good as wheat" is another agricultural phrase, equivalent to the commercial one "as good as gold."

"Sound on the goose," or "all right on the goose," to be true to the principles of a political party. This phrase had its origin in Kansas, during the contentions in that state on the subject of the extension of negro slavery within its limits, and meant adhesion to slavery.

"A hard row to hoe;" an agricultural metaphor for a difficult task. "Gentlemen, I never opposed Andrew Jackson for the sake of popularity. I knew it was 'a hard row to hoe.'"—Colonel Crockett. "To hoe one's own row," to attend to one's own business.

"Hurry up the cakes." During the winter season in America there is a great consumption of buckwheat cakes at breakfast-time at all the great hotels and boarding-houses. They are served hot, and fresh from the kitchen, and eaten with butter and syrup. Men of business, in haste to get breakfast over, make such continual appeals to the waiters to "hurry up the cakes," that the phrase has become the popular synonym to command haste. If a steam-boat is late in starting from the pier or wharf, an impatient passenger will call out, "Now then, captain, hurry up the cakes!" or a linen-draper's assistant, slow in exhibiting his fineries to a lady, is likely to be reminded that he should "hurry up the cakes."

"As big as all out of doors;" anything very large or important. "I will never truckle to any man, though he be as big as all out of doors."—M'Clintock's Tales.

"To keep a stiff upper lip," to remain firm to a purpose, to keep up one's courage. "My friend, don't cry for spilt milk. Keep a stiff upper lip, and all will come right again."—Knickerbocker Magazine.

"Knee high to a mosquito," very small; a phrase often used in speaking of a person whom one has known from infancy. "The lovely Mrs. Smith? Oh, yes, I knew her before she was knee high to a mosquito."

"Log-rolling" and "axe-grinding." These phrases are used in political parlance to signify the action of members of Congress, or of the local legislatures, when they have private purposes in view in their support of public measures; they also describe the personal motives of lawyers and others who introduce bills. When one member says to another, "Vote for my bill, and I'll vote for yours," that is log-rolling; and when a member supports a measure by which he expects to get a place for a friend or a relative, or gain some personal advantage for himself, "he has an axe to grind."

"Pipe-laying" is a political phrase which signifies the practice of procuring fraudulent votes, towards the close of a popular election, in sufficient number to turn the scale. "The result of the Pennsylvania election would not be in the least doubtful if we could be assured of fair play and no pipe-laying."—New York Tribune.

"One horse;" an agricultural phrase, applied to anything small or insignificant, or to any inconsiderable or contemptible person: as a "one-horse town," a "one-horse bank," a "one-horse hotel," a "one-horse lawyer." A clergyman, deprecating the use of such attenuated expressions as "dang it!" "blow it!" "confound it!" described them as "one-horse oaths." The popularity of this phrase led to the coinage of its converse, to describe something that was great and magnificent. "Let us have no one-horse candidate for the Presidency. General Grant is the man. He is a whole team; a horse to spare, and a big dog under the waggon."—New York Herald.

"Savage as a meat axe," to be very angry and violent. "It riled me so, that I just steps up to him, as savage as a meat axe, intending to kick him down-stairs."—Sam Slick, Human Nature.

"To row up Salt River," to court political defeat; "to be rowed up Salt River," to be politically defeated. If the defeat be very overwhelming the unsuccessful party is said to be "rowed up to the very head waters of Salt River."

"To run one's face," to get goods on credit on the strength of your personal appearance. "Any man who can run his face for a card of pens, a quire of paper, and a pair of scissors, may set up for an editor, and by loud, incessant bragging, may secure a considerable patronage."—New York Tribune.

"To shoot your grandmother," to make a great mistake, to be much disappointed, to do what you did not intend; sometimes used in the same sense as the English phrase "to find a mare's nest."

"Sirree, Bob;" an emphatic assent or negative. "Yes, sir!" is the first form; still more emphatic is, "Yes, sirree!" and most emphatic of all, "Yes, sirree, Bob!" In a case before a Baltimore court of justice the attention of the judge was called to a juryman who appeared to be intoxicated. The judge, addressing him, said, "Sir, are you drunk?" The man stood up in a defiant attitude, palpably drunk, and replied, "No, sirree, Bob!" "Well," said the judge, "I fine you ten dollars for disrespectful language to the court—five dollars for the ree and five for the Bob."

"Small potatoes;" any thing or person that is small, contemptible, or petty. "I took to attending the Baptist meeting, because the Presbyterian minister is such small potatoes that it wa'nt edifying to sit under his preaching."—The Widow Bedott. "Give us an honest old soldier for President, and none of your small-potato politicians and pettifogging lawyers."—New York Herald.

"Some pumpkins;" the converse of small potatoes; something great and important. "Franklin was a poor printer's boy, and Washington only a land-surveyor, yet they growed to be some pumpkins."—Sam Slick.

"To stand up to the rack," to be up to the mark or point; to do what is expected of one, or what one has promised. "I began a new campaign at Washington. I had hard work to do; but I stood up to the rack, fodder or no fodder."—Colonel Crockett.

"A surprise party." A party of persons who assemble by previous agreement at the house of one who does not expect them. These surprise parties are generally friendly, and organised for the purpose of presenting a poor clergyman or politician with a testimonial, a purse of money, or gift in kind, to supplement his income. There are surprise parties of a more disagreeable kind, as when a knot of people visit a negro who has had the audacity to make love to or insult a white girl, for the purpose of tarring and feathering, or driving him out of the town, with the menace of death, if he dare to return to it.

"Tall." This word was formerly the recognised slang for the talk of a braggart or a liar, but may be applied in every case where inordinateness, excessiveness, and great magnitude enter into the idea of the speaker. "He is the greatest pedestrian mentioned in the annals of tall walks." "If we don't come out in full force we'll have a tall fight with the gang." "The general found a whole potful of the tallest kind of jewels." "I shall walk tall into varmint and Indians, it's a way I've got."

"Three cheers and a tiger." After the usual three cheers at a convivial or other party, when in England there would be a call for the Kentish fire, or one cheer more, there is in America a call for the "tiger," a growl, like that of a wild animal, in which all the company take part. The "tiger" is very effective for its purpose.

"To take the back track," to recede from a false position after having gone too far; a phrase derived from the life of the hunter and trapper in the back settlements.

"To be up to the hub," to be in a difficulty, as the wheel of a vehicle is when embedded to the centre in bog or mire.

"To wake up the wrong passenger," to make a mistake. It is the practice on board the "long-shore" steamers that make stoppages at all the ferries, villages, and towns on the route, to wake up such of the passengers as have reached their place of destination. Mistakes of course occur on these occasions; hence the phrase and its wider acceptation. Sam Slick, in his Nature and Human Nature, represents a Northern philanthropist condoling with a Southern slave on the miseries of his condition. "Massa," replied the negro, "you have waked up the wrong passenger dis time. I isn't poor. I get plenty to eat and plenty to drink. When I wants money missus give it to me."

"Whole soul'd," to be generous, genuine, noble-minded.

"The slate." The list of people recommended to office by a political party, as a reward for political services, real or

imaginary. "A slate smasher," a president, or high official, who will not give places to the nominees of the party. "Let General Grant be encouraged to smash the slate. He is a great slate-smasher."—Cincinnati Enquirer, March, 1869.

"Clear the skirts," to vindicate the political character, and clear it from taint. "He has not cleared his skirts from sympathy with the truth." "You do not in the least touch the question, nor do you clear the skirts of General Grant and of your party, for the basest treachery to the people."—Letter in the New York Tribune.

Among other similes and metaphors in common use in America, and that differ from those ordinarily heard in England, may be cited: "As out of sorts as a down-stream shad." "I'm as dry as the clerk of a lime-kiln." "As long as a thanksgiving sermon." "As sharp as the little end of nothing." "As slick as greased lightning." "As tight as the bark of a tree." "As wroth as a militia officer on training day." "As useless as whistling psalms to a dead horse." "Thrashing around like a short-tailed bull in fly-time."

Dr. Bartlett's Dictionary of Americanisms, from which many of these words and phrases are quoted, was compiled in 1857-8, and published in 1860. It is a portly volume of five hundred and twenty pages, and contains, besides the undoubted Americanisms, great numbers of Scotch and English local words that are wholly or partially obsolete at home; but have been revived with a new life in the new country to which they have been transplanted. Dr. Bartlett's book will doubtless be extended at an early period, as the last ten years have produced their own crop of words, uninvented at the time his amusing compilation was made. English slang grows fast in our days; but American slang grows infinitely faster, and has the merit of being a great deal more humorous and comic than the English article.

SOLDIERS' BALLADS.

I.

The Battle of Prague.

AN OLD ANONYMOUS BALLAD STILL POPULAR AMONG THE PRUSSIAN SOLDIERS.

[The battle of Prague referred to in this rough old German Hussar ballad was the battle of Prague so well known to generation after generation of young English pianoforte players. It was not, however, fought against the Turks, but took place at the siege of the picturesque capital of Bohemia by Frederick the Great, one of the earliest of that long series of grand robberies which gradually helped to build up Prussia into a compact, powerful, and aggressive kingdom; and at last to turn it, as we have seen, into one of the strongest, most ambitious, and most dangerous of the military powers of Europe. We picture to ourselves some of Ziethen's cavalry shouting their quaint doggerel the night after Leuthen, while old Fritz, stalking past their bivouac fire, gives them a grim stare, with his large round eyes, watching them from under his huge, dingy, cockaded cocked-hat, as the red light for a moment glances on the diamond star on his breast, and on the well-worn hilt of his sword, fatal to so many an Austrian. In that rough song the sublime old scoundrel heard the echo of fresh victories.]

To blockade Prague, that fine old town,
We Prussians one day sat us down.
Our camp it stood us in good stead,
Stored well with powder and with lead.
Our cannon were all laid with care,
And Schwerin was our general there.

Fast rode up our Prince Heinrich then,
Followed by eighty thousand men.
"Now all my army would I give
So my brave Schwerin did but live.
O Fate! O Fate! war's hardest lot,
That Schwerin should so soon be shot."

A trumpeter to Prague we sent
To learn what was the town's intent,
Whether to open or stand out;
But the Bohemians, staunch and stout,
Would never yield their liberty,
Bombarded then the place must be.

Who did this little song indite?
Well, three hussars who came to fight.
With Seidlitz's corps they were drawn up,
And in old Prague they hope to sup.
Hurrah! Wohoop! Victoria!
Old Fritz himself was there, hurrah!

II.

Going into New Quarters.

AN OLD GERMAN MILITARY BALLAD, DATE (PERHAPS THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR), AUTHOR UNKNOWN.

[One likes to think that Tilly's and Wallenstein's brave musketeers may have perhaps chanted this ditty at the gates of Magdeburg the night it was taken, and that our old friend Dugald Dalgetty, passing his horny hand over his long gaunt face and grizzly moustaches, may have thereupon said in Latin of Marischal College to some Swedish friend in trouble: "Marry, these same German rogues love a good stave almost as well as they do plunder, and by St. Andrew in that last charge in truth they broke in on our pikes like so many mad bulls. Even my late master, the great Gustavus himself, would have said 'Bravo' at the onset, and now fighting being thirsty work, more especially when one has been beaten, let's into the town, old comrade, and have a stoup of good Bacarac." "You will? Marry well said, Soldado." "By your right then, forward. There's good wine at the Kaiser Rudolph's—good wine. By your right."]

You people be merry, the soldiers—hurrah!
Singing now greet you jucheira—sa—sa!
They're from the German land
As you well understand,
Merrily coming to quarter on you.

Solid good fare and a welcoming face
Are better than banquets in every case.
Bring us the drink along,
Landlord join in this song:
Deutschland hoch lebe, hoch leb' der Soldat.

Germans are hearty and always are ready,
Tender to maidens, in battle as steady.
They love with keen desire
A kiss, wine, and battle fire,
Words that are truth, and a jovial song.

Maiden beware of your little heart's flight,
Love often comes like a thief in the night.
When daylight sees us go,
Many will say "Ah, no."
Sobbing with sorrow, and tears in their eyes.

For the soldier knows neither of peace nor of rest,
To-day he is here, there to-morrow a guest;
Home and love changing see,
Till to head-quarters we
March when the death drummer beats the roll call.

FROM BRADFORD TO BRINDISI.

IN TWO FLIGHTS. FLIGHT THE SECOND.

On arriving at Munich, I found that, owing to the tardy way in which we had travelled, the train for Ala had started some half an hour previously, and that there was nothing for me to do but to remain until ten o'clock at night, and then travel by the express. I was not sorry for this, for I sadly wanted washing and shaving, to say nothing of a little rest after constant travelling. So as soon as I could thread my way through the immense crowd waiting to receive the bodies of the deceased heroes, I jumped into an open fly, here called an einspanner, and told the driver to take me to the Vier-Jahreszeiten Hotel. During this drive, which was a tolerably long one, I had an opportunity of seeing many of the splendid buildings, and passing through the cheerful and excellent streets of this handsome city. Arriving at the hotel, which deserves the reputation which it has attained of being one of the first in Germany, I was shown into a bright little room on the entresol, the bedroom portion of which was shut away by portières, while the other portion made a most perfect little sitting-room, with its bright white china stove, its comfortable sofa, neat writing-table, and elegant curtains. After my toilet, which included the operations of a barber, who brought back to me reminiscences of German shaving-soap, which I had forgotten for twenty years, I descended to the salle à manger, and ordered breakfast. Such a comfortable, cosey speisesaal; not the great salon where the table d'hôte is held, but a small room, where breakfasts and luncheons, and cheery little unwholesome German suppers are served. We have made some little improvement in England lately in the coffee-rooms of some of our railway hotels, which are now thoroughly comfortable; but even in them there is wanting the air of cosiness which is to be found at the Vier-Jahreszeiten. The portraits of the Queen and of the late Prince Consort are not uncommon on the walls of English hotels; I think I have met with one or two of the Prince and Princess of Wales, and I am certain that the late Duke of Wellington is occasionally represented; but in what English hotels will you find the walls of one of the principal rooms hung with admirably executed engravings of painters and musical composers, with the place of honour over the mantelpiece occupied by the "counterfeit presentments" of two poets? Yet, as I ate my breakfast, I was gazed upon by Mozart and Mendelssohn, by Beethoven and Von Weber, with Goethe and Schiller over the mantelpiece. I doubt whether the mention of the name of Tennyson to the average English waiter would awaken any response, but the square-built, stolid-looking Bavarian who attended on me knew all about Freiligrath, and asked me if I had heard his latest song of the war.

After breakfast, by which time it was about noon, I sallied into the streets of the town to see the shops. Capital shops of all kinds, some splendid cafés, not after the French model, which is open and airy, but after the German, which is closed and steamy; cafés in all of which men are seated behind huge glasses of beer, a few playing dominoes, many reading the papers, nearly all talking about that interminable subject, the war. I notice, too, an extraordinary number of shops for the sale of periodicals, the windows of which are filled with maps of the seat of war, with pictures of the engagements of Wörth and Gravelotte, and of the arrival of the first batch of French prisoners at Munich, but, above all, with caricatures. Of these last the Emperor Napoleon is the hero. A conscientious study of Punch for many years, has proved to me that Mr. Tenniel's pencil is the most admirable reflex of English popular opinion so far as the ex-emperor is concerned. When all went well between the English and French, and the entente cordiale was in full blow, Louis Napoleon always appeared in Mr. Tenniel's cartoon as a middle-aged gentleman of marked, but by no means unpleasant features. But on the first hint of any difficulty occurring between the two nations he became suddenly old, his nose grew into a proboscis of extraordinary dimensions, his stomach swelled, his legs shrunk, and the curls on each of his temples were converted into the "aggerawators" of the ruffian and the jail-bird. But even when Mr. Tenniel was most severe, his sketches were characterised, as must be everything done by that accomplished artist, by refinement and artistic feeling, two creditable qualities

which his German brethren have very decidedly abnegated. Nothing grosser than the caricatures of the emperor and the ex-empress, which I saw publicly exhibited in the windows of the Munich print-shops, can possibly be imagined, and it surely is no excuse to say, as I have seen it said in print since my return, that during war-time excesses of this kind are permissible, and that the sketches of our own Gilray during the French war were equally offensive. General decency, has, thank Heaven, made a vast stride in advance since Gilray's time, and any imitation of the social sketches of that artist would now find, in this country, neither vendor nor purchaser. The omnivorous war literature has even laid hands on our two old friends, Schultze and Müller, so well known to the readers of the Kladderadatsch. I bought a little book called Schultze and Müller auf dem Kriegs Schauplatze, with a coloured frontispiece representing the two heroes driving furiously on a gun-carriage, beneath which a wretched little Napoleon was swinging, crouched in a pickel-haube, and from the preface I learned that:

> Die zwei, die oft mit Friedenswitzen
> Ein loser geist erschemen liess
> Sie send auch, wo Kanonen blitzen
> Und ziehn mit Deutschland vor Paris.

They are a nice people the Germans, honest, true, and pious, but they are not funny. Anything duller than the adventures of Herren Schultze and Müller it would be difficult to imagine; and even in this little would-be comic pamphlet an unpleasant feeling towards England was discernible.

I wandered about the streets and public gardens until it was time to go to the table d'hôte, and after dinner I retired to my room, and slept until awakened by the waiter's arrival to tell me that the omnibus was at the door. Inside the omnibus was a pretty little lady, surrounded by a number of small parcels, and bags, and bundles of wrappers. Her husband, a stout Frenchman, with the appearance of a commis-voyageur, was smoking a cigar on the hotel steps, and when he had finished it, and not before, he came and asked his wife in a querulous tone whether all their parcels were right. She said she believed so. He was evidently a man of a bilious temperament, as shown by his yellow skin and his close-cut beard, like cotton velvet, and this expression irritated him immensely. "You believe so; how is it that you have not counted them, my wife?" he exclaimed still more querulously than before, and then he made the little woman get out of the omnibus, and go through all the packages one after another. Even then he was not satisfied, but kept up a rumbling fire of complaint all the way to the station, where he left her to look after everything, and consoled himself with a glass of absinthe at the buffet.

We started from Munich at ten o'clock, and about three hours afterwards arrived at Kufstein, where we had to change carriages, and where we remained for nearly an hour in a refreshment-room, which was little better than a cabaret, but where the food and drink, such as they were, were good. Here the French gentleman built his wife into a distant corner behind a wall of packages, and leaving her there proceeded to refresh himself with ham sandwiches and beer. There was an outer division of this restaurant which partook more decidedly of the estaminet character, and in it, for the first time in travelling, I heard a man venture to express some respect for the French people, as distinguished from their emperor, and some pity for them in their misfortune. He was one of the railway guards, and spoke with fluency and feeling, but was compelled to succumb to the howl of execration which greeted him on every side. The French gentleman looked in while this discussion was going on, but withdrew hastily. It had a softening effect on him, for on my return he had handed to his wife over the rampart of packages the fragment of a ham sandwich, and the dregs of a glass of beer.

In the new lot of carriages I had for companions three Italian men and one boy. They were of a lower class than one is accustomed to meet with in first-class compartments, and they did not speak a single word of any language except their own, of which I knew but very few sentences; but they were a cheery, pleasant lot, and we managed to get on tolerably well together. There was an old man, very red in the face, very hooked in the nose, very white in the beard, who would have been a pleasant companion but for the severe bronchial affection under which he laboured, and which led him to go through performances that made one's blood run cold. There was a heavy, middle-aged man, of the street-organ-playing order, very square-jawed, very black-eyed, very olive-complexioned, and there was a young man of the regular tenor type, who might have been Gennaro or

Elvino, or any of the other heroes of song. The boy was fair-haired and frolicsome, and took an immense fancy to me, entertaining me with a great many jests, which I could not understand, but, moreover, with a good deal of pantomime, which I thoroughly appreciated. It began to grow very cold soon after we left Kufstein, and my fellow-travellers, who had no superfluity of wraps, took up the light sleezy green drugget, which covered the bottom of the carriage, and turned it into a grand universal coverlet for themselves. I buried myself in my Ulster, and my sealskin cap, and my Scotch plaid, and we all went to sleep.

I woke at dawn, in time to see some of the best features of the Brenner Pass, over which we were making slow but steady progress. The topmost peaks of the Alps, on which the eternal snow lay glistening, the grand slopes and fells covered with the interminable array of fir-trees, the broad verdant valleys dotted here and there, now with solitary Swiss châlets, now with small white-faced villages, a handful of houses nestling round a quaint little chapel, now with convents standing serene but solitary, and now with châteaux well built and well kept; past gorges, passes, and defiles; through great cuttings, where the light of day, hitherto struggling to appear and to make us warm and cheerful, is cast back and shut out; now winding along the edge of a precipice, looking down on the tiny thread of silvery stream hundreds of feet below us; now skirting the base of over-hanging snow-topped cliffs, past every variety of splendidly grand scenery—we make our triumphant way, make it, moreover, seated in a comfortable railway carriage, stretched out at our ease, and with our wraps around us. Those persons who bemoan the cramped inside and the freezing outside of the old mail-coach, the spanking tits, the mendicant coachman and guard, the horrid British dinner swallowed in ten minutes, and the general extortion and misery, will wail over the obliteration of the dirty mule and the foul muleteer, the long wearisome climb, the longer and more wearisome descent, the dangerous corners, the miserable food, the bitter cold, the entire wretchedness of the proceedings. I who, rightly or wrongly, look upon all members of the Alpine Club, and mountain climbers in general, as being more or less mad, am thankful for the establishment of a line of travelling by which I can penetrate into Italy in comfort and security.

The general improvements in continental institutions certainly extend to the custom-house. I perfectly recollect how, twenty years ago, in the then waiting-room at Cologne station, they called out, "Ein hundert und vier," and how I, perfectly ignorant of the German language, had no notion of their vociferations referring to the number one hundred and four on my portmanteau, and how, when they made me comprehend it, they searched it through with ferocity, and slammed it to with vehemence. This time at Cologne, before they had finished asking me whether I had anything to declare, they had chalked my portmanteau, and let it pass. It was the same now at Ala, on the Austro-Italian frontier, where I and the chief of the Italian dogana exchanged many jokes, set off on his side with an amount of rib-poking and back-slapping, in which he seemed greatly to delight.

> Am I in Italy? Is this the Mincius?
> Are those the distant turrets of Verona?
> And shall I sup where Juliet at the masque
> Saw her loved Montague, and now sleeps by him?
> Such questions hourly do I ask myself,
> And not one stone in the cross-way inscribed
> "To Mantua," "To Ferrara," but excites
> Surprise, and doubt, and self-congratulation.

So said Mr. Rogers, poet and banker, and so say I, proser and commercial traveller. The outward aspect of the country certainly would not have told me that I was in Italy, and as for that magnificent sky, that "blue unclouded weather" of which I have heard so much, it had evidently forsaken us for the nonce. I have seen quite as clear skies as this in Hyde Park, and infinitely clearer at Torquay, but there can be no doubt about my being in Italy, and at Verona, for my three Italian fellow-travellers tell me so, and the porter at the station indorses the remark by adding that we here change carriages, and have twenty minutes to stop. So I tumble out on to the platform, and enter the restaurant, and have that particularly nice preparation of filet, which throughout the entire Continent is known by the name of biftek (but which is no more like the peninsula of juicy meat which you get in Fleet-street than I am like Hercules), and wash it down with half a bottle of Capri, a wine of which I have heard in England, but have never yet tried, and which I now find to be a particularly satisfactory drink.

When I rejoin the train I see, for the first time, the Two Gentlemen of Verona, who are both in attendance on one lady. One of these gentlemen is dark and clean-shaved, but for his heavy moustache, and

is generally Mephistophelian; but he is so complaisant, stands so much in the background, and occupies himself so very much with his newspaper, giving way so completely to the other gentleman, that I at once see he is the husband of the lady. The other gentleman is short, fair, full-bearded, and attentive to a degree. He does not like my entrance into the carriage into which Mephistopheles has kindly beckoned me. He looks after the lady's hand-bags and wrappers, and buys for her the prettiest bouquet which the flower-girl in attendance has to offer. In fact, he takes the whole supervision of the lady's comforts upon himself, and only retires just as the train is about to start, when he yields up his position with a good grace, and Mephistopheles glides into it. The lady to whom their attentions are devoted is the first specimen of the Italian donna that I have seen. She has not, however, "the high dama's brow," nor can one quite discover "her heart on her lips, and her soul in her eyes." She is a passably pretty woman, with large, black eyes, of which she makes excellent use on her fellow-travellers. Mephistopheles does not seem to mind; he is deep in the columns of l'Italie, a journal published in Florence, in the French language, which he is good enough to lend me when he has finished with it, and where I read the first news I have seen since leaving home. So on, until we reach Padua, where we have three hours' rest, and where, after a consummation at the restaurant, in which, as there is no reason against it, I, being for the time solitary and celibate, make my first acquaintance with that grand ingredient of Italian cookery—garlic. Here I fall in with two German students on a pleasure trip, who seem to be much more civilised than the German students of my time, and are clean and well informed and enthusiastic. We "do" Padua together in the little time at our disposal, walk through the long arcades, reminding one somewhat of the rows at Chester, look into two or three of the churches, so splendid in the interior, so brick-barn like and unfinished on the outside, and notice a hundred sights new and strange to me; and though I encounter that shovel-hatted priest, whom it is so difficult to get rid of, and who will come back to repeat his "good-night," in the Barber of Seville, I look in vain for the learned Doctor Bellario, who lent his legal trappings to Portia for her masquerade, nor a little later at Ferrara did I come upon any traces of Maffio Orsini and his comrades; nor did I see the ducal palace with the practicable B over its gateway, the removal of which by Signor Mario Gennaro's dagger I had so often witnessed.

I slept at Bologna that night at a magnificent hotel, excellent in every respect, called the Hôtel Brun. It is impossible to do better than go to the Hôtel Brun. A little awe-struck by the magnificent corridor through which I was conducted, a corridor decorated with frescoes, and rather grimly ornamented with marble busts of the Roman emperors, I regained all my courage when inducted to the cheery, comfortable little room allotted to me, and the hotel remains in my memory as a singular example in its every arrangement of the blending of the magnificent and comfortable. I arrived at the railway station next morning to start for Brindisi, with no idea of the honour in store for me; but I soon found that the mission on which I had been despatched by the house had become known, and that not merely was I to travel by special train, but that I was to have the honour of being accompanied by the First Minister of Public Works, who was coming specially to Brindisi to inaugurate the service, the start of which I had been despatched to superintend. The line of rail runs nearly the whole of the way along the shore of the Adriatic, passing Ancona, and other well-known places, and having a lovely undulating country on its other side. Our progress might be considered to some extent a triumphal one, for the news of the advent of the minister had preceded us, and at all the stations at which we stopped we were met by deputations of the townspeople, anxious to look upon this great creature, and, as I afterwards understood, to implore him to commemorate the occasion of his visit by recommending the local magnates for a ribbon or decoration. The "crowning of the edifice" was, however, reserved until the day after our arrival at Brindisi, when a grand banquet was given at the new and yet unfinished hotel, over which the minister presided. Various toasts were proposed, and the speakers were unusually excited, one of them declaring that the two great events of the nineteenth century were the entrance of King Victor Emmanuel into Rome, and the despatch of the Indian mail viâ Brindisi. With this last service the house with which I am connected had something to do. I was accordingly called upon to address the assembly, and at this glorious point in my career I think it best

to take leave of my readers, leaving them to imagine that such magnificent oratory as I have just recorded was infectious.

THE DEFENCE OF SARAGOSSA.

Soon after Murat's cruel street slaughters in Madrid, in May, 1808, half the cities of Spain sprang to arms. Foremost among these was Saragossa, the capital of Arragon.

When the patriots rose against their cruel invaders, the populace deposed Gullielmi, the governor, and Tio Jorge Ibort and his adherents chose as their nominal leader José Palafox, a handsome Arragonese nobleman, "a son of Saragossa," and an officer in the Spanish royal body-guard. Palafox had good advisers. His tutor, Basilio Boggiero, wrote his Spartan proclamations; Santiago Sas, a priest, managed convenient miracles to rouse and sustain the populace; while Tio Jorge and his two peasant lieutenants kept up the fighting, though the defence of the place began, as Southey says, with only two hundred and twenty men, one hundred dollars, sixteen cannon, and a few old muskets. Lefebvre and his nine thousand French arrived on June the 15th, 1808. Had he pushed on at once the place must have fallen; but he paused, and Tio Jorge and his peasants had time to make the town tenable. The inhabitants were brave and superstitious. The houses were little fortresses of solid stone, the streets tortuous and narrow, and adapted for defence. In the skirmishes outside the town Palafox was victorious, and this success roused the courage of Saragossa to the highest point. A small party of daring French cavalry penetrating into the place were cut off to a man. The Spaniards had time to plant some cannon before their gates, and also on the Torero, a hill outside the walls. A French detachment which tried to storm the Portillo gate was repulsed with loss, the Spaniards not staying to load their muskets after the first volley, but closing on the French with their knives and bayonets. Half the detachment being cut to pieces, Lefebvre fell back, losing in the retreat four hundred cavalry and twenty-seven baggage waggons.

But the storm only lulled for a moment. At the end of June the French returned with reinforcements, and reoccupied the key of Saragossa, the Torero, at once, the officer in command, basely flying, leaving behind him the tools of the canal company, which were exactly what the French engineers most needed. But the Spaniards were not easily daunted; they remembered their previous successes, and they believed that the Virgin would drive away the hated Frenchmen from the city she had always cherished. They tore down all their window-curtains, turned them into sand-bags for the batteries, and placed guns, defended by ramparts and trenches, before each of their nine gates. The mud walls of the suburban gardens, and the remains of an old Moorish rampart, furnished points of defence for the stubborn Arragonese, who there found cover from French bullets. Loopholes for muskets, and openings for cannon, were pierced everywhere. Houses that would protect the enemy were pulled down, and olive gardens that would shelter the French tirailleurs were remorselessly rooted up. The women, as brave as the men, formed themselves into parties to relieve the wounded, and to carry water and food to the defenders of the batteries, while the children brought the soldiers the cartridges made by the monks. Foremost among the women was the beautiful Condesa de Burita, who brought wine and provisions to the soldiers, and tended the wounded and dying amid the tremendous fire of shot and shell. Every day sorties were made, and the enemy assailed in the olive woods that surrounded the city. About the last day of June a powder magazine blew up in the centre of the city, and reduced a whole street to ruins. At this moment of confusion the French opened a destructive fire. A sand-bag battery before the Portillo gate received the brunt of the attack. The French, on the Torero side, entered and destroyed the beautiful convent of Santa Engracia. The sand-bag battery at the Portillo gate was several times destroyed by the French guns, and bravely reconstructed under fire. It was at this spot and at this crisis that a heroine appeared. Augustina, the celebrated Maid of Saragossa, was a handsome itinerant lemonade seller, twenty-two years of age. She had arrived with food for the soldiers at the moment when the battery had been swept clear of every defender. The people, daunted by the sight, hung back. The brave woman instantly rushed forward over the dead and dying, and snatching a lighted match from the hand of the dead artilleryman, fired off a twenty-six pounder. Then jumping on the gun, as Wilkie represents her, with dishevelled hair and stormy eyes, she swore to the Virgin never to quit the gun alive while the siege

lasted. The people, encouraged by this woman's almost supernatural daring, rushed back into the deserted battery, opened a tremendous fire, and repulsed the French attack. But the enemy closed in nearer and nearer, as a murderer's hand closes on a victim's throat. Above the city the Ebro was fordable, and below the city the French constructed a bridge. Transporting their cavalry by these means to the opposite bank of the river, they destroyed the flour-mills of the town, and cut off all supplies of food and ammunition. But Palafox and his advisers were energetic and untiring. They ground their corn in horse mills, and set the monks to work at making gunpowder. All the sulphur in the place was carefully collected, the earth in the streets washed to obtain from it saltpetre, and charcoal was made from hemp stalks. Towards the end of July food began to run short, and the hopes of succour began to die away. A defence of forty-six days had exhausted the strength of the defenders. A desperate rush to recover the Torero failed. The French bombardment continued cruel, remorseless, and unintermitting. On the 2nd and 3rd of August, the Grand Hospital, dedicated to the Virgin, and one of the largest in Spain, was burnt with all its sick and wounded. A white flag was hoisted, as it were to implore mercy, but it was made a special mark for the bombs. The soldiers all hastened to the rescue of the sick and of the foundlings, and even women were indefatigable, in spite of shot, shell, and flame. On the 4th of August the French opened a battery on the Santa Engracia quarter, swept away all the mud walls, took the batteries at the gates, turned the guns on the Spaniards, and penetrated to the Corso in the very centre of the town; yet here the resistance was more obstinate than ever. Every house became a fortress, every doorway a barricade, and a scorching fire towards evening drove back the French to Santa Engracia, with a loss of fifteen hundred men and several generals. From the convent that night Lefebvre wrote his stern summons to surrender:

"Head-quarters—Santa Engracia. Capitulation!"

The instant reply of Palafox was equally laconic:

"Head-quarters—Saragossa. War to the knife.—Palafox."

The French now occupied all one side of the Corso; General Verdier watching the fighting and giving orders from the Franciscan convent in the centre. On the other side were the Saragossans, who had thrown up batteries at the openings of all the side streets. The intervening space was soon so heaped up with dead that Palafox, afraid of contagion, pushed forward French prisoners, fastened by ropes, to remove the bodies. At night the most savage sorties were made against the batteries on either side, and there was a great deal of hand-to-hand fighting inside the houses.

At last the end seemed coming. On the 5th of August the ammunition of the Spaniards began to run short, and the people called out to be allowed to attack the enemy with only their knives, when at the very crisis there arrived a providential convoy of provisions and ammunition, escorted by three thousand Swiss guards and Arragonese volunteers, led by Don Francisco Palafox, a brother of the general. The people took fresh heart. At a general council it was now agreed, amid shouts from the people, to fight till all Saragossa was consumed, and then to retire over the Ebro to the suburbs, and defend them till every man had perished.

For eleven days longer the Spaniards fought from street to street, house to house, room to room, wall to wall, roof to roof, till their knives broke, their cartridges were spent, and hundreds died on the point of the French bayonets. During the night of the 12th of August the French batteries were particularly destructive, and when they ceased firing, flames were seen to break out in many buildings that they held. On the morning of the 14th, however, to the astonishment and joy of the people of the tormented city, the enemy's columns were beheld at a distance retreating in dark masses over the plain of the Ebro on the road to Pampeluna. The defeat of Dupont at Baylen had compelled Lefebvre to retire from the all but exhausted city, which, he boasted with truth, he had left "un amas de décombres." According to Ford, who is always severe on Spanish failings, Palafox after this went almost mad with vanity, claimed all the glory to himself, wrote bombastic despatches, and neglected every proper preparation for future defence.

Three months after came Napoleon's revenge. The Spanish heroes routed at Tudela, the French again invested Saragossa, this time attacking both sides, and especially the Jesuit convent on the opposite bank of the Ebro, which the tardy Spaniards, after their way, had neglected

to secure. Four marshals—Lannes, Mortier, Moncey, and Junot—conducted the siege. In spite of the proclamations of Palafox, the old men, women, and children refused to leave the city; but all the French residents were sent out of the place, for fear of treachery, and the nuns were permitted to go to distant convents. The walls had been mounted with one hundred and fifty pieces of cannon. Old and young worked unceasingly at an outer line of defensive works. Large stores of provisions were collected, as well as arms and ammunition. Twenty thousand regular troops, and fifteen thousand armed peasants, were enrolled to form the garrison. Moreover, every house was barricaded, and provided with several weeks' food. The brave Countess de Burita came forward, and this time with three hundred women of all ranks, to tend the wounded, and to carry provisions to the gunners in the batteries. The Maid of Saragossa, too, again came to the front, and took her station beside the old gun at the Portillo gate. A boy of fourteen presented himself as a soldier, and being rejected as too young, mixed with the troops, captured with his own hand a stand of French colours, and, in the sight of the army, carried them into the Church of the Pillar, and laid them as an offering on the altar of the Virgin.

The French army consisted of thirty-five thousand men, and a battering-train from Pampeluna of sixty pieces, while a corps of cavalry, stationed at Fuentes, scoured the country round the besieged town. Suchet's division took the Torero at the first assault, capturing three guns and one hundred prisoners. A brigade of Merle's division also gained a work commanding the sluices of the canal. To Moncey's demand for the capitulation of the place, Palafox replied: "Talk of capitulation when I am dead. If Madrid has surrendered, Madrid has been sold. We know how to die. We in Saragossa are not to be frightened by the horrors of a siege. We have shown that before." The French reply was seven columns of infantry, who bore down on the suburbs like so many battering-rams, winged by a large body of horse. They were met by Brigadier Don Josef Manso, captain of the Royal Guards, and pushed back after a hot fight of five hours. The attack of the reserve was even more tremendous; and the Spaniards wavered, till Palafox and Generals O'Neil and Saint Marc rode up, sword in hand, rallied them, and broke the French, who left four thousand men dead in the streets and fields, and under the garden walls. Two days after, General Gazan attacked the suburb on the left side of the river, but four thousand Spaniards in the woods and gardens, although at first dislodged, eventually repulsed him, with a loss of nearly one thousand men. The French then began a regular investment of the stubborn place, and Moncey fixed his head-quarters on the Torero.

Palafox addressed a proclamation to the people of Madrid, in which he promised, when free himself, to hasten to their deliverance. "The dogs by whom I am beset," he said in the true Spanish manner, "scarcely give me time to wash their blood from my sword; but they will find graves ready for them at Saragossa." In a sally on the last day of the year, the French suffered so much, that Palafox, who knew the value of such playthings, ordered every Spaniard who signalised himself in this affair to wear a red ribbon on his breast. The priests and friars behaved as well as the fighting men. Honour, enthusiasm, and duty animated every heart; but, alas! a more terrible enemy than the French had appeared. Pestilence had broken out.

Junot, released from his duties in Portugal by our disgraceful convention of Cintra, now took the command. The new broom swept clean, and the bombardment immediately began. Its chief fire, directed on Palafox's quarters, destroyed the Court of Audience; and the French carried the monastery of San Josef and the bridge of La Huerba. The shells fell so fast that the priests could not even carry the sacrament to the dying. About this time, Don Francisco Palafox, brother of the governor, and a member of the Supreme Junta, slipped down the Ebro in a boat, and in concert with the Marquis de Lazan, organised bands of guerillas to harass the enemy's communications and cut off his supplies; but Mortier eventually attacked and dispersed these zealous partisans. Lannes, Duke of Montebello, sent by Napoleon to reproach and quicken Junot, as Junot had been sent to quicken Moncey, broke at once through the new wall of the town, and resolved to destroy house by house.

Three companies of miners and eight of sappers prosecuted this work night and day, the Spaniards vainly attempting to countermine them. Meanwhile, the bombardment was unnecessarily and cruelly kept up. In forty-eight hours six thousand shells were thrown into the town, two-

thirds of which were soon in ruins. During the whole siege the French expended seventeen thousand bombs. The powder used by the Spaniards had to be made day by day, and, their shot being expended, they had at last to depend on the French cannon-balls, which they collected and returned. On the 27th of January the French effected their first lodgment, and on the 30th they blew up sixty houses, but every inch of ground was stubbornly contested, and Lascoste, the French commander of artillery, was shot. After forty-two days' bombardment, the fighting continued as hard as ever. The inhabitants of the ruined houses took refuge in the cellars of their friends, and, owing to the overcrowding, typhus fever broke out. The soldiers, exposed to deep snow, with scanty food and too little sleep, perished by hundreds. Famine, also, began to appear; for much of the food had been destroyed by the French miners. Thirty fever hospitals were erected in the city, and as one by one they were removed to fresh places to escape the inhuman bombardment, the fever was spread in every quarter. Horrors on horrors accumulated. From the fever alone about three hundred and fifty half-starved wretches died daily. The hospitals were too small, and the medicines were exhausted. The burying-grounds were choked, and grave-pits had to be dug in the streets, into which the dead were tossed without care or respect. Heaps of putrescent bodies, piled before the churches and waiting interment, were often struck and scattered by shells. But the people did not quail. Still the French gained ground. They carried the monasteries of the Augustines and the Las Monicas, two of the last strongholds. Driven from the breaches, the French sprang mines, and so broke in. The Spaniards fought from pillar to pillar, from chapel to altar. While they fought the roofs fell in, but the people still fought madly among the smoking ruins. On the 1st of February things looked so desperate that the leading patriots proposed a capitulation, but Palafox would not yield. Seventeen days more they fought, but the convents of St. Francisco and Jesus were wrested from them by the French. The suburb on the left of the Ebro was also taken. A tremendous fire from fifty guns cleared the way for the assailing columns. The convent of St. Lazarus was breached, the bridge carried, and one thousand five hundred Spaniards captured as they were retreating into the town. The brave Baron de Versage, who commanded, was killed, but many Spaniards escaped in boats, or by running the gauntlet of the bridge. In the mean time, all went ill with the unhappy town, and Palafox, struck by fever, lay insensible in a vault, Don Pedro Maria Ric presiding over the Junta in his stead. Only sixty-two horses were now left for the cavalry; the rest had died of hunger. Of the infantry only two thousand eight hundred remained fit for service. The ammunition was all but exhausted; and if a shell pierced the roof of the Inquisition, the last manufactory of powder would be destroyed. The fortifications were almost utterly demolished, and there was no cloth or sacking left from which sand-bags could be made. The Junta in vain sent the Duke de Villahermosa to Palafox to try and glean from him if there were any hope of succour from without; but the fever had seized his brain. He could only mutter incoherently. His papers gave no hope. Of the Junta, twenty-six were for capitulation; eight, including Ric, the president, against it; but the minority was allowed to prevail. Marshal Lannes, asked to grant an armistice of three days, refused, and the cruel bombardment continued. On the 20th a desperate sortie was made, but made in vain, to recapture two guns which the enemy had the day before taken. It was dark indeed now over Saragossa. The fifty French guns in the suburbs opened fire on the city, and destroyed all the streets near the quays. The Junta was compelled to test the feelings of the brave people. Two-thirds of the city were in ruins. Thirty thousand (half) of the inhabitants, and five hundred officers, had perished, and from three hundred to four hundred people were daily dying of fever. Saragossa was, in fact, destroyed, and the Spaniards' oath was fulfilled. A flag of truce was sent up to the French head-quarters to arrange the terms of a capitulation. Marshal Lannes, always rough and brutal, was at first disposed to insist on unconditional surrender, but Ric declared that rather than consent to that the last Saragossan would die beneath the ruins of the last house.

It was accordingly conceded that the Spanish troops should march out with the honours of war; that the heroic Palafox should be suffered to retire to any place where he might choose to reside; and that all persons not included in the garrison should be permitted to at once quit the city to avoid the contagion. On the 21st the

forts were delivered up to the French, who began immediately to pillage, "according to their custom," says the historian. In this siege the French had expended, with their seventeen thousand shells, one hundred and sixty thousand pounds of powder. The terms of capitulation were shamefully violated by Lannes. The French committed all sorts of crimes in Saragossa, stripped Palafox even to his shirt, and sent him a prisoner to Vincennes; while two hundred and seventy of the prisoners, who were compelled by famine and disease to follow them into France, they butchered on the road. During this gallant and memorable defence no less than six hundred women and children perished by French bayonet or shot.

The Maid of Saragossa fought as bravely as before. "See, general," she said to Palafox, when she took her former station, "I am here again with my old friend." When her husband fell wounded at her feet she discharged his cannon at the enemy to avenge his fall. She also frequently led the sorties, and, sword in hand, with her cloak wrapped round her, fought daily in the streets. When the city surrendered, Augustina was taken prisoner, but, catching the fever, was removed to the hospital, and thence escaped. Manuella Sanchez, another heroine, less fortunate, was shot through the heart. The poor Countess Burita, after escaping innumerable dangers, died of grief on hearing that her daughter had been killed.

MISS PONSONBY'S COMPANION.

In Twelve Chapters.

CHAPTER V. GUMBOGE FLINGS DOWN THE GAUNTLET.

The first visit to the new patient, memorable as it had proved, had by no means yet developed all its results. An hour or two after her master's return, Lyddy reported that little Susan had been met by George on her way to the post-office, where she was taking a letter from Miss Dampier. She was crying her heart out about the loss of the ten pounds, and the accusations against herself and her mother. George, who was a distant kinsman of hers, had tried to comfort the little maid after his dry, stolid, rough kind of way; but even a short story of some bacon that a woman with lemons stole from George's great precedent, Squire Troughton, at Big Bookham, had failed to clear her mind, she not being, perhaps, logical enough to see the strict analogy of the two cases.

"And I say it's shameful," was honest Lyddy's comment; "a cantankerous old creature, driving her servants about, and fancying every one stealing from her. Shouldn't wonder after all if she's put it away somewhere, and forgotten it. The idea of that good little thing stealing. Why, I would trust her with untold gold. No, it's been what George says—and he sticks to it, George does—that it was one of those women who come about with lemons and cabbage-nets, or one of those flash-looking would-be gentlemen, with bright scarfs and sham jewellery, who come round with finery to tempt poor servant girls; or else one of those shivering tramps, who are always moving their shoulders about as if they'd just been flogged. They'd found some garden door open, and taken the opportunity perhaps of Susan's going out on a message to slip up-stairs and hide under the bed, then stolen the note, and got away."

Poor little Susan! This was her first sorrow, and that is a terrible event in all lives.

Over Tom Cringle's Log, one of the most delightful sea novels in the world, the young doctor had been spending the busy man's pleasant hour before bed, and was now writing to his father, a hearty old doctor down in Devonshire. It was his father's seventy-first birthday, and Frank had much to tell him of his progress and his prospects, that would cheer and delight him. Loading his big china pipe, given him by a chum at Heidelberg, Frank alternately smoked and wrote.

It was half past eleven, and Crampton was getting very sleepy. There was no sound, except now and then the ponderous tramp of a policeman past the window that looked on the street, or the rusty chimes in the old church, that staggered drowsily through an indistinguishable psalm tune. Once there came a wild shriek of tipsy laughter from the door of the Norfolk Arms, probably from some of Gumboge's set, breaking up after a long evening at pool, and then the persistent torpid silence of night swamped the whole Crampton world in a sable deluge of peace and dulness. Once after that two rather thick voices stopped outside the window, and expressed strong but rather inarticulate opinions on the liberal ministry, and the necessity of instantly doing something to save the nation. Then Lethe rolled on again with its silent flood. Tresham was just finishing his long letter with an account of his new and probably profitable patient

(not a word about Lilly Dampier—but why should there have been ?), when there came a silent tap at the window. Dandy, dreaming of rats, leaped up and barked furiously. The tap came again, this time so loud that one of the panes of glass cracked. Tresham had a fine temper, but his blood was effervescent, and this roused him. In a moment he rushed at the shutters, flung down the bar, and threw open the window.

"Who's that ?" he cried. "What do you want at this time of night ? You'd better take care," with other belligerent threats.

The glowing face of Gumboge confronted him. Gumboge was distinctly tipsy; his very hat was drunk, for it was dinted in front, and brushed with extreme care the wrong and fluffy way. He held a long church-warden's pipe in his hand, with which he had (obeying a sudden and irrational impulse) tapped at the window of the man whom he considered had injured him. He stared stupidly as the window opened, and addressed the universe generally in a stammering, violent, ejaculatory, maudlin, angry way :

"Shabby — shabby. Wouldn't taksh away pashience — shabby. Wouldn't be mean——"

"Look here," said Tresham. "You drunken scoundrel, if you make that noise here, I'll come out and knock you down. Go home and sleep yourself sober."

"Shelf shober !" echoed Gumboge, in a querulous way, instantly changing to rage. "Are you shober ? This for you—d—— you, you stuck up humbug—shober yourself. I want shatisfackshun. What did I do wrong ? Shent blishter first shing—man at pike. Next shend to me for steshe-shecope, get steshecope, then don't want it —want pillsh. What are you to do ? What is—what are you to do ? Yah ! shabby."

"Look here," said Tresham, firing up, "if you aren't gone before I unbolt the front door, I'll make you repent it."

People were beginning to look out of the windows.

"Mind this," said Gumboge, plaintively; "I'm going to marry that girl at the old lady's. She's to have all the tin, and I'm not going to be cut out by shabby fellow. If you want to fight, come out !"

Tresham's hot hand was already on the key of the front door, when there was a sound of a low, grim voice, and some one laid quiet but violent hands on Gumboge. Throwing open the front door, Tresham looked out and saw the drunken man with his coat off helpless in the grip of Humphries, the superintendent of police. Always taciturn, imperturbable, and regarding innocent people with an air of suspicious toleration (as if it was very doubtful whether they would not soon pass through his hands), the superintendent, upon whom people stumbled at all hours of the night, for he never seemed fatigued, and was always alert and watchful, called a policeman, who looked like a broken down Roman, in a helmet too large for him, and told him to see Mr. Gumboge home, and not to let him stop anywhere to take anything.

Gumboge growing suddenly sociable, was charmed with the attention.

"Jolly good fellow," he said. "Only my chaff, you know. Let's have glasses round. Come and have a bottle of cham.

Up to any hour of night, my boys,
Up to anything you like, my boys !

Charley Humphries 's a jolly good sort—so says every one. You're Charley—you're Champagne Charley. Ha ! ha ! Very good. Bear no malice. Tresham, tip us your fist. Don't pull a fellow about, Bobby. Good-night all—jolly fellow !"

The superintendent looked after him with a stern look.

"There's one of his pals stopped him at the Norfolk Arms and wants him to have some more. Come, none of that. See him home, Harvey. That's one of his betting chums from Gypsum—been about here lately; gives a false name, as I think—bad lot. Gentleman rider he calls himself. Pretty gentleman. Billiard sharper, I think—plays a great deal too well."

"By-the-bye, Humphries," said Tresham, "what do you make of that robbery of the ten pounds at Miss Ponsonby's ?"

The superintendent looked down in a mysterious way at his massive boots, as if he were looking down a well.

"Can't spell it out yet, sir," was his answer. "Ask me a week from now, perhaps then I may tell you a little more about it. It isn't the little servant-girl, I can see that; I don't think it is the other servant girl, and I don't learn anything yet about any lover. It is not for me to say yet who done it, but I may have my thoughts" (here the superintendent winked at the nearest lamp—a grave wink, but still a wink), "but the note is gone" (here the superintendent gave a sudden, sharp, suspicious look at the moon), "and some one took it. I don't say, mind, he or she, but some one. But I must begin my rounds. Good-night, sir. That gentleman won't disturb you again."

"He'd better not," said Tresham. "Bythe-bye, how's that arm of yours, Humphries—stronger? That's right. Goodnight, superintendent." And he shut the door and locked it.

"That fellow," thought he, as he blew out the lamp and turned off the gas, "to think of Lilly. Caliban and Miranda. Drunken, idle ruffian. No, it can't be—and yet girls like her — poor, dependent — leap at any offer. She may already have encouraged him."

How audacious, how timid love makes us! How the colours of Hope's rainbow blind men's eyes! Did he remember now his recent taunt at poor Lilly's presumed poverty? Then he pulled out the violets, kissed them musingly, and repeated to himself all that Lilly had said. Mr. Frank Tresham was very far gone indeed.

CHAPTER VI. THE OLD SEAT UNDER THE CHESTNUT.

The spear-shaped chestnut leaves, no longer green and transparent, but dry, brown, and opaque, rustled in the October air. The sunshine dappled the great twisted trunks of the chestnut avenue in Summerdene Park, a mile outside Crampton. Upon the netted bark of one tree a squirrel ran, stopping to look down with his large brown eyes as Lilly's brown eyes looked up at him. The dry leaves rustled under her feet as she walked along, looking at the flying shadows on the great chalk bluff that rose a quarter of a mile to the left above the mill, from whence there came a busy mellow rumble, agreeable to the ear. No blue gleam of kingfishers down the stream, no anchored fleet of water lillies, no blossoming hazels now; the year had no time to trifle, it had grown wiser, and was gloomily meditating over its impending bankruptcy.

In the park the rooks were swirling down or strutting about, glossy in the sunshine, while the quiet, stolid sheep nibbled on, caring as little for any of their vagaries as the world does for the whims of poets. The great white clouds that rolled along the clear blue sky were no bad imitation of those of summer. Yet dead leaves were everywhere rustling, blowing, whirling, scattering, as full of pranks as fairies out for a holiday. All these pleasant sights found pleasant accompaniment in the little harmless, plaintive music of a robin, which, perched on the broken spar of one of the huge old trees that some one who had seen Shakespeare might have planted, sang his simple autumn hymn to cheer the dying year. Every now and then a train shot by along the valley, its great breath discharged in huge puffs of white vapour, that remained a moment apparently solid masses in the air, and then melted away up the hill-side.

On a rough massive seat of plain hewn timber, under one of the largest of the trees that stood on a gentle slope at the end of the avenue, at a little distance from the main body of trees, and commanding a view of the road that led through the park towards Gypsum, Lilly rested for a moment to sketch a chestnut which struck her as more beautiful than the rest. She looked very pretty as she sat there, and perhaps the old brotherhood of trees liked to have her among them, for every now and then bough after bough, as the wind passed over them, seemed to undulate with pleasure, and the big fellow over her let a leaf or two fall on her paper, as if in that way playfully to recognise her presence. It was difficult to say in what the special charm of Lilly consisted, but the trees, we suppose, recognised it, wooden-headed as they were. True her eyes were clear and of great depth of colour; true her hair was of the softest brown, turning golden at the temples; true that a delightful little dimple in her cheek seemed always playing at hide and seek with the rest of her face; her beautifully shaped head was charmingly poised on her shoulders, and a smile like a gleam of sunshine was always playing round her mouth; and yet it was none of these things that specially struck you in Lilly. It was rather the fine, sensitive intelligence in her whole expression, and in every movement, that was the talisman that won you, and that disclosed, without the consciousness of the possessor, that there was a nature more than usually lovable, pure, and womanly.

That morning, though the walk had freshened her blood, and given her a slight glow, which added to her beauty, Lilly's face wore an air of anxiety which was unusual to it. Once or twice she closed the book, in the fly-leaf of which she was sketching, and thought, and her little foot, as she did so, moved uneasily among the rough brown chestnut husks that covered the ground before her like little dead hedgehogs. Was she really, as Mercy had cruelly hinted, beginning to feel the fetters of patronage growing tighter round her wrists, or was she only thinking of that pleasant conversation in the twilight, by the parlour fire? Or had some fresh trouble already——? But in the midst of this reverie Lilly was roused by a little terrier

suddenly darting at her in a fury of noisy recognition, manifesting it by snapping and barking at the leaves, and dashing round in circles. It was Dandy. She looked round—Frank Tresham stood there. Her colour deepened just one tinge of rose as she held out her hand to him. He sat down beside her.

"And you told me you did not draw?"

"You don't call this drawing?"

"Yes I do, and a very pretty sketch too. I only wish it was my book it was enriching. Browning, too! I hope you like his poetry?"

Then she opened the book, and they looked over it together. Now looking over a book in this way is one of the pleasantest things in the world, especially in the April days of love. Not that Lilly was in love, of course not. Nor would Tresham have owned any such absurd impeachment; but still he felt intensely happy sitting there, however much the old rector of Bracken might be grumbling at his delay. A soft warmth, as of sunshine, seemed to come upon his cheek, and the breath of cowslips moved around him, but only for a moment, for Lilly, suddenly aware that their faces were rather near together, in the most natural way possible took the book, and laid it on her lap to pick out a favourite line.

"Is not a quiet evening beautifully painted in this line?" she said.

> "Where the pale-coloured end of evening smiles,
> Miles on miles.

Is not that charming? Oh, it is so pretty!" And she made a sort of movement of her lips, as if she were kissing the poet, and clapped her hands with a thoroughly innocent and natural delight.

Tresham looked with delight at Lilly's eyes, which sparkled with pleasure, and wished he were a poet. He agreed it was beautiful, and, like an admiring disciple, asked her to show him some other favourite passage. He could have listened all day, but, on the whole, he preferred reading the same page together. Lilly, not knowing even the very elements of coquetry, went on in her own way.

"And this, too," she said; is not this perfect?" and she read the first few lines of Pippa Passes:

> "But forth one wavelet then another curled,
> Till the whole sunrise not to be suppress
> Rose, reddened, and its seething breast
> Flickered, grew gold, then overflowed the world.

I don't know whether I should like that or not," she said; "but I do. I seem to see the sunshine rising over the world, and everything rejoicing, and gladsome, and happy, like Pippa herself. It is like beautiful music; it is like beautiful painting, and I feel happier as I read it; for do you know I felt just like that this morning when aunt asked me to go to Summerdene and borrow a book of sermons for her of Miss Henry."

"That mill down there," said Tresham; "do you know what it always reminds me of?"

"No. What?"

"Why of that lovely song of Tennyson's:

> It is the miller's daughter,
> And she has grown so dear, so dear,
> That I would be the jewel
> That dances in her ear, &c."

And Tresham repeated the verses with perhaps rather more fervour than was required. "But, unfortunately," he said, "the miller is a miserable forlorn bachelor. There is no beautiful daughter there."

Lilly looked down at her foot, and rolled under it a chestnut husk, that ought to have been proud of such treatment.

They both remained silent for a moment. The most perfect confidence and the pleasantest talk had turned, they neither of them scarcely knew why, to a momentary embarrassment. Then Tresham rose.

"I hear some one clanking my chains," he said, "and calling me back to my slavery. I promised to be at Bracken Rectory by twelve o'clock, and it is now a quarter past. I've got to vaccinate the grandchildren, and George is coming round for me with my dog-cart. I sent him with some medicine to Summerdene. Good-bye, Miss Dampier. I only wish I could pass here every day, and every day find you here feeding on the sunshine like Pippa. Good-bye."

"And I too ought to hurry," said Lilly, laughing. So they shook hands and parted. Lilly did not turn her head, but struck out resolutely on the footpath leading to Summerdene. He watched her pass through the great iron gate, then he whistled Dandy, and walked towards Crampton, for Bracken lay the other side of the town.

He had just got out of the avenue into the main road when he saw two persons, about twenty yards before him, coming from Crampton. One was walking, the other was riding a well-bred horse, which was swathed in the usual yellowish-brown body clothes, striped with black and red, and its eyes peeping conspicuously out of the holes cut for them, like a horse at a masquerade. The man on foot (who was no other than that eminent practitioner, Mr. Gumboge) had a puffy red face, wore a black velvet shooting-jacket, and walked

rather lame, while his companion, a lean, dapper horsey man, with a large gilt horse pin in his scarf, had the air of a groom at a training stable.

Gumboge's eyes were bloodshot, his hair was dry and straggling, his whole appearance parboiled, uncomfortable, untidy, and feebly veneered with his usual vulgar flashiness. If the Duke of Mesopotamia had fallen ill just then the advent of Gumboge might not have struck him favourably.

Gumboge stopped when he and Tresham met, and held out his hand with a sham frankness and obtrusive joviality, which was rather repelling than inviting. "I have, by Jove! to apologise, Tresham," he said, "for knocking you up the other night. Served me right if I'd got a hiding. Awfully screwed. Been keeping it up with a fast lot at Gypsum, and lost a good deal of tin. Down on my luck generally. Coming home broke my mare's knees. You're a good fellow. You won't bear malice, now, will you? All gag of mine, you know, about old Miss Ponsonby. Quite right of you going, of course. Made some infernal mistake about the medicines—jumbled up somehow. And all infernal humbug of mine about the companion" (here he turned and gave his friend a look). "Never exchanged two words with the gal. Not my style at all. I was doosed sorry about the whole affair next day, wasn't I, Joey?"

Joey said Gumboge had been very much cut up indeed.

Tresham shook hands (not with exuberant cordiality, it must be allowed), and said he had forgotten the whole matter. It had put him out for a moment. Then they parted.

"Good fellow, but slow," thought Gumboge. "Why that barmaid at the Eclipse would chaff his head off in ten minutes."

Just as the gate of the chestnut avenue slammed after the precious pair, Tresham heard the man on the horse say to a boy who came up from the direction of Summerdene:

"I say, you boy, did you meet a young lady on the road to Summerdene?"

"Yassur," said the boy; "just beyond the avenue."

The moment he said that, the man stooped down, spoke hurriedly to Gumboge, took off his hat, pulled out a letter, threw it back, then thrust on his hat, and galloped off in the direction indicated.

A pang of some strange feeling, scarcely jealousy, yet not unlike it, shot through Tresham's mind. It must be Lilly the man was riding after with the letter. Who had written that letter? It could not be a proposal from Gumboge, who had just denied any acquaintance with her. "What a fool I am," he said to himself. "I'm not in love with the girl, and yet I am indulging in these fancies. It was not Lilly he was riding after. How could any one have known that Lilly, who hardly ever comes out at all, could be on the Summerdene road that morning—at that hour? I must be in love to be such a madman. No, I'm not in love; and, after all, what does it matter if it was for her?" he added.

Ten minutes after this, just past the cemetery outside Crampton, George caught him up with the trap. Tresham got in, and was silent for a moment.

"Left that medicine at Holsworth's?" he said, when he broke silence.

"Yes, sir."

"By-the-bye, George, did you meet that young lady who is at Miss Ponsonby's on the road?"

"Yes, sir, overtook her just half-way to Summerdene."

"Was she alone?"

"Well, sir, she was talking to a groom, who handed her a letter.

"Do you know the man at all?"

"Know him! Yes, sir, it was Joe Parsons. He used to be at Squire Troughton's stables at Big Bookham. He was a bad lot then, and he's no great account now. Is at the training stables at Gypsum as I've 'eard. He'd forgotten me. Well, at whatever stables he is he'll never set his eyes on stables like Squire Troughton's, I warrant him."

"And even if I did like her," thought Tresham, "what right have I to be jealous? No doubt some young lady friend has written to her for books, tatting patterns, or some nonsense; yet it is odd the man should come here to see her; but perhaps some one told him that she was here. Yes, of course, that's it. What a fool I am!"

So lovers torment themselves, and from the crystal battlements of hope toss themselves into abysses of torture.

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THE ROSE AND THE KEY.

CHAPTER XIV. GUESTS AND NEIGHBOURS.

When, that evening, Miss Maud entered the vast drawing-room, it was some minutes past eight. The outer world was in twilight, but lamps glowed faintly here, upon the thick silken curtains, and lofty mirrors, and pictures, and treasures of china, and upon figures of people assembled for dinner. The little party was almost lost in the great void, as Miss Maud made her journey, over a comparatively gloomy desert of thick carpet, to the group illuminated by the soft light of the lamps.

Tall old Mr. Foljambe, the vicar, was entertaining Lady Vernon with his bland and dignified conversation. Doctor Malkin would have liked that post, but the vicar came first, and seized it.

The vicar is a well-connected old gentleman, related, in some remote cousinship, to the late Sir Amerald Vernon, and knows very well what he is about. Has not Lady Vernon, the relict of that lamented kinsman, two extremely desirable livings in her gift, besides smaller things? And, old as the Reverend Mr. Foljambe is, are not the incumbents of these fat fields of usefulness older still? Is not the Reverend Mr. Cripry eighty-nine? And is not the venerable Doctor Shanks ninety-two, by the records of Trinity College, Cambridge? Compared with these mature ornaments of the Church, the vicar justly feels himself a stripling; and being a young fellow, not yet in his seventy-first year, he may well complain of a selfish longevity which is sacrificing the interests of two important parishes which require a vigorous ministration.

The vicar's shrewd old eye, from its wrinkled corners, observes Doctor Malkin's wistful look, and knows from experience that he likes to take possession of Lady Vernon's ear, and has suffered more than once from the tenacity with which he keeps it, when he can, to himself.

"Nothing of the kind shall happen to-night," thinks the vicar, who, having a handsome bit of money in consols, has sold out a hundred pounds to invest in a subscription to the monument of his predecessor, the Reverend William Howard—a good work in which Lady Vernon takes a warm interest, as she always does in anything she takes up.

The vicar has her fast upon this, and the doctor thinks he can read sly triumph in his eye, as, once or twice, it glides over to him, and their glances meet for a moment.

"Well, doctor, and how's all wid you?" inquires the Reverend Michael Doody, with a grin that shows his fine white fangs, and a trifling clap of his enormous hand on the doctor's shoulder. "Elegant, I suppose?"

The doctor's slight frame quivers under the caress of the cleric, but he smiles politely; for who knows what influence this new importation may grow to in this part of the world?

"I'm very well, thanks—as well as a fellow, so much knocked about as a doctor, can be in this hot weather."

The doctor is a pale man, a little bald, with a high pale nose, a long upper lip, a receding chin, very blue, and a pair of fine dark eyes, set too close together, and with a slight obliquity which spoils them a great deal, and does not improve his countenance; his shirt-front is beautified with needlework, and his rather tall choker, for his neck is long, is made up by his exemplary laundress with a snowy smoothness worthy of the neatness and decision with which the doctor ties it.

"My governor, the vicar, has Lady Vernon fast by the button," continued Mr. Doody, with something like a wink. "She must be a very conscientious woman, to listen so well to her clergy. He was talking about Vicar Howard's monument when I was near them, just now."

The doctor laughed and shrugged, and Mr. Doody thought for a moment he squinted a little more than usual.

"Our good vicar has but one subject at present," says the doctor, who gives Mr. Doody, as a stranger, credit for a good deal of waggish penetration. "You have heard of the clarionet-man who had but one tune, and played it always through the key-hole, till it answered its purpose, and extracted a gratuity; and he made it pay very well, I believe."

"And raythor hard, doctor, that you can't get your turn at the key-hole, eh, my boy?"

And the reverend gentleman utters a stentorian giggle, and pokes his finger on the doctor's ribs.

"I don't quite see, Mr. Doody," says Doctor Malkin, with a very creditable smile, all things considered.

"Boo! docthor, my darlin' fellow, don't be comin' the simpleton over us. Don't we both know that every man in your profession likes to stand well with the women? And here you are, and if it was to make a man of ye, not a word can ye edge in. It's too hard, docthor, that the man of death should be blocked out by a tombstone. Be the powers, it ain't fair! He's takin' her all over the monument; up on the pedestal, down in the vault! It's an unfair advantage. But, never mind, my boy, ye'll be even with him yet; ye'll attind him in his next indisposition."

This pleasant banter was accompanied by a running explosion of giggles; and while the tall and rather handsome Irishman is enjoying his little bit of farce, with intense relish, the vicar and Lady Vernon are discoursing thus:

"I thought, Lady Vernon, you would like, of course, in the most private way in the world, to collect opinion upon the monument; so, as he draws very nicely, my wife says, I allowed my curate, Mr. Doody, just in the strictest privacy to ourselves, you understand, a peep at it, for about five minutes, this morning. He thinks it very fine indeed—very fine—as, indeed, every one who has seen it does. There is, I fancy, but one opinion. I wish so much, Lady Vernon, I might venture to invite you to pay my church—yours, indeed, I might more properly call it—a visit to-morrow, to look at what I may term your beautiful gift to the sacred edifice."

"No, thanks; I shall see it time enough."

"But, as it owes its existence, Lady Vernon, to your extremely munificent subscription——"

"I thought it was due, as the bishop said, to a very good clergyman," says Lady Vernon, quietly cutting it short; "and I gave what I thought right. That is all. And so your curate draws?"

"I'm nothing of a draughtsman myself, but my wife understands it, and says he draws extremely nicely."

"That tall young man, is he?"

"I ought to have introduced him, Lady Vernon. It was an omission—an inexcusable omission—a very inexcusable omission." He was trying to catch his curate's eye all this time. "He has been with me only a week, and yesterday he did duty at Loxton. You remember, Lady Vernon, you thought an Irishman would answer best."

"The bishop says he has found them extremely energetic, and for very hard work unrivalled."

"He's a very rough diamond, I must admit. But he's a convert from Romanism, and a very laborious young man, and a good scholar."

He had beckoned Mr. Doody to approach, and accordingly that herculean labourer in the apostolic field drew near, a head and shoulders above all the other guests. The tall old vicar alone was sitting.

"Allow me, Lady Vernon, to present my curate, Mr. Doody," says the vicar, rising to do the honours.

Mr. Doody is not the least overcome by the honour. His fine eyes have examined the lady, of whom he has heard so much, but of whom he has not had so near a view before, with the grave curiosity with which he would have scrutinised an interesting piece of waxwork.

The florid young man, with black whiskers and glossy black head, makes his best bow gravely, and inquires unexpectedly:

"How are ye, ma'am? A good evening, Lady Vernon." A form of salutation with which it is his wont, as it were, to clench an introduction.

Lady Vernon does not mind answering or reciprocating these rather oddly placed greetings, but talks a few sentences with

him, and then turns again to the vicar, and the curate, after a little wait, turns on his heel, and seeks employment for his active mind elsewhere.

Let me not be imagined to present an average Irish curate. Mr. Doody is almost as great a prodigy at home as anywhere else. His father, with his own hands, in his bare shins, with a dhuddeen stuck in his caubeen, cuts turf in the bog near the famous battle-field of Aghrim. He is not a bit ashamed of his father or his belongings. He holds him to be as good a gentleman as himself—being the lineal descendant of the O'Doody of Tyr Doody—and himself as good as the primate. He sends his mother a present every now and then, but the farm is well stocked, and his parents are, according to primitive ideas, wealthy people in their homely way. His lapse into Protestantism was, of course, a sore blow. And when Doctor Pollard's wife mentioned to the priest, with perhaps a little excusable triumph, that Michael Doody had embraced the principles of the Reformation, his reverence scratched his tonsure, and said:

"I'm not a bit surprised, ma'am, for he was always an impudent chap; but there was some good in the boy, also; and go where he may at present, so sure as I'm a Catholic, he'll die one."

CHAPTER XV. DINNER.

Old Mr. Foljambe takes precedence, at dinner, in right of his cloth, connexions, and antiquity, and has taken lady Vernon into the dining-room, and converses assiduously with that great lady.

Maud finds herself between the curate and Doctor Malkin. Middle-aged and agreeable Captain Bamme resents an arrangement which isolates him, and eyes the curate with disgust.

Captain Bamme does not count age by years. He knows better. As long as a fellow looks young, and feels young, he *is* young. The captain smiles more than any two other men in the parish. He is short and square, but he skips and swaggers like an officer and a gentleman. Who can talk to a girl like Charley Bamme? Who understands that mixture of gaiety and gallantry—with now and then a dash of tenderness—like this officer? To be sure he's not a marrying man; every one knows that. It is out of the question. The captain laughs with a melancholy scorn over his scanty pittance. A fourth son, by Jove! and put to a poor profession. But is he not the life and soul of a picnic, and the darling of the ladies?

"I've been quartered in Ireland," says little Captain Bamme, under cover of the surrounding buzz, to his more fortunate neighbour, Doctor Malkin. "I've been in every part of it; I have talked to Irishmen of every rank and occupation, but such a brogue as that, I give you my honour, I never heard. Why, they wouldn't have him to preach to a congregation of carmen in Dublin. I never heard anything like it. How did old Foljambe light on him? I really think, when people bring fellows like that to a place like this, where people *must* know him, and, for anything you or I can tell, that fellow may spend the rest of his days down here—by Jove! it's pleasant—they ought to be prepared to give an account of him. I suppose Foljambe can say what he is? You never met such an insufferable creature. I never spoke to the fellow before in my life; and he came up to me in the hall here making some vulgar personal joke, I give you my honour."

"He seems to succeed very well," says the doctor, "notwithstanding. I suppose there's something interesting in it, though you and I can't perceive it."

"Upon my soul, I can't."

And with this declaration he turns to Mrs. Foljambe, who is at his right, determined to make her account for her intolerable curate.

Mrs. Foljambe is tall, deaf, and melancholy—a woman very nearly useless, and quite harmless.

"I was saying just now to Doctor Malkin," begins the captain, "that I've been, at different times, quartered in Ireland——"

A footman here presents at the captain's right hand an entrée which he loves, and on which he pounces.

"A daughter in Ireland?" repeats the drowsy voice of Mrs. Foljambe, turning her dull and small grey eyes upon him, with a heavy sigh.

"No, ha, ha! not yet. No. Time enough for that, I hope. I'm not married, Mrs. Foljambe—thanks, that will do. I say, I have been a little puzzled by your curate's accent." He was speaking low, but with measured articulation; for although the Reverend Michael Doody's voice is loud and busy at the other side of the table, and the buzz of conversation is general, that odious person's ears, for aught the captain knew, may be preternaturally acute. "And

although I know Ireland pretty well—Athlone, Limerick, Cork, Dublin, and all that—yet I never heard his accent before in my life."

Mrs. Foljambe bowed her patient grey head, and did not seem aware that any answer was needed.

"Can you say what part of the country he comes from?" persists Captain Bamme.

"I rather think Ireland," replies Mrs. Foljambe, with an effort and another sigh.

"I rather think so myself," says the captain, in a disgusted aside, over his veal and truffles. "The woman knows no more about him than my hat does of snipe-shooting," he says, in the doctor's ear, and drowns his indignation in a glass of hock, which the butler at that moment charitably proffers.

The doctor has now got into talk with Miss Vernon. The captain has no wish to steal good Mrs. Foljambe's bothered ear from old Mr. Puntles, who is labouring to entertain her. So Captain Bamme attends to his dinner with great concentration and energy for some time. It was not until he came to the iced-pudding that he thought of the Reverend Michael Doody again, and his joke upon the captain's stature—"a fellow I had never exchanged six words with before!"—and raising his eyes, he saw, with a qualm, those of the florid divine, fixed jocosely on him from the other side of the table.

"Upon my soul, it is very nearly intolerable!" the captain protests, mentally, as he leans back, with a flushed face. He resolves that this fellow must be snubbed, and laughed at, and sat upon, and taught to know his place, and held at arm's length.

As the captain has, however, nothing clever ready, he prefers not noticing the curate's expression; and throwing into his countenance all the dignity which a not very tragic face can carry, he avails himself of Mr. Eccles's murmur at his right elbow, and takes a glass of Madeira.

"I'll drink a glass of wine widgye, captain," insists the curate, recurring to a happily obsolete usage. "Get me some white wine."

The captain bows and stares, with a rather withering condescension and gravity, which, however, does not in the least tell upon the impervious curate, who, his glass replenished, observes with a hilarious smile, "An agreeable way of makin' acquaintance with my flock; better than a dhry domiciliary visit, captain, by a long chalk. I pledge you, my gallant parishioner—and here's to our better acquaintance."

The captain nods curtly, and gulps down his wine, without half tasting its flavour; but even on these terms he thinks it is well to have escaped that brute.

Miss Vernon is again talking to the curate. How disgusting! He turns, without thinking what he's doing, to his right, and his eyes meet the dull and innocent gaze of grey Mrs. Foljambe, who, recalled to the festive scene, makes an effort, and tells him her only story.

"We knew two very respectable poor women in this town. Anne Pluggs was one, and her sister, Julia Pluggs, was the other; there were two. They had both been servants, cooks, and they lived in the small house, last but one on your left, as you go towards the windmill." A deep sigh here. "You'll know it by wall-flowers growing at the door; at least, there were, about a year or two ago; and they had saved a little money; and Mr. Foljambe had a very high opinion of them, and so had I." The captain bows. "And about sixteen years ago they gave up their house here, and went to Coventry; it is a good way off, you know."

The captain knits his brows and calculates rapidly.

"About forty-seven miles—by Jove, it *is* a good way."

"And when they arrived there, they set up a confectioner's shop, in a small way, of course."

"Oh?" says the captain, very much interested, "that was very spirited of them."

"It had a bow-window that was painted brown, it was at a corner of a street near one of the spires, and they did very well, and they are both alive still."

Another deep sigh followed.

"What a pity!" says the polite captain, who is looking across the table, and thinking, at the moment, of quite other things. The good lady does not hear his comment, and so its slight incongruity is harmless, and the captain inviting the conclusion of the tale, says, "and——?"

But the story is over. That is all. And good Mrs. Foljambe, contented with her contribution towards keeping the conversation alive, is looking, in a melancholy reverie, on the table-cloth.

As she has dropped off his hands in this gentle way, the captain resigns her with a good grace, and listens, undisturbed, to other talk.

Lady Vernon has now taken the curate into council, and is leading the little cabinet. Mr. Michael Doody is attentive, and seems impressed by what Lady Vernon is saying. She has the reputation of being

a clever woman, with a special talent for government.

Mr. Puntles is listening, and sipping his wine; and being a polite old man, now and then plagues Mrs. Foljambe with a question or a remark.

Doctor Malkin is in animated conversation with Miss Vernon. He is, perhaps, a little of an esprit fort; but in a rural region, always more pharisaical, as well as more pure than the city, he is very cautious, the more particularly as his great patroness, Lady Vernon, is a sharp and ready Christian, not high-church, not low-church; people at both sides of the controversy complain in whispers of ambiguities and inconsistencies; she is broad-church. Yes, very broad-church. She would throw the church-gates wide—as open as her heart—as open as her hand. She has built plain, sober churches—she has built meeting-houses—she has built florid chapels and churches, gleaming with purple and gold, and with saints and martyrs glowing in brilliant colours from stained windows, such as rejoice the heart of that learned and Gothic Christian, Archdeacon Complines. Her flatterers speak in this vein: and they are legion. The promoters of the projects which she vivifies by her magnificent bounty may hate their equally successful rivals, but they like her money; and they are extremely careful not to offend her, for she has not the reputation of forgiving easily.

Doctor Malkin talks to Miss Vernon on her pet subjects, theories, and vagaries of all sorts, the abuses and corruptions begotten of an artificial system, bold social reforms, daring sentiments on all forms of civil government, treated romantically rather than very learnedly, or, indeed, very wisely.

And now Lady Vernon, having established an understanding with old Mrs. Foljambe, rises, and with that dejected lady, and Maud, takes her departure. Captain Bamme, gallantly standing as guard of honour, with the handle of the open door in his hand, smiles with supernatural sweetness, sees them off, and returns to complete the little party of five.

THREE MODERN SIEGES.

Of all the events of the cruel and devastating Thirty Years' War, the siege of Magdeburg was one of the most interesting. Christian William, the deposed Administrator of Brandenburg, had roused this flourishing city by warnings of Catholic cruelties and premature promises of assistance from Gustavus Adolphus. The Protestant city, in the pride of its almost republican freedom, had already defied the anger of the redoubtable Wallenstein; and Tilly, the scourge of Flanders, now determined to wreak his rage upon these defiers of the Emperor. Count Pappenheim at once cut off the rash Administrator from his Saxon communications, and in March, 1631, closely invested the town, to destroy it before the cautious Gustavus could advance to its relief. The outworks were soon carried, while Dietrich Falkenberg, the Swedish governor, destroyed the bridge over the Elbe, and having insufficient troops, abandoned the suburbs of Sudenberg and Neustadt to Tilly, who instantly reduced them to ashes. The garrison scarcely exceeded two thousand infantry and a few hundred horse; far too small a number for a large and straggling fortress. The citizens were all armed, but the poor had grown mutinous, complaining that they bore the brunt of everything, and that the rich hired substitutes. Nevertheless, religious zeal, a love of liberty, a hatred of the Austrians, and a belief in the speedy arrival of Gustavus, kept the city firm for resistance. Tilly's trumpeters each time brought more favourable terms. The defenders grew hopeful and careless. The enemy's batteries were close to the ditch, and one tower had already fallen, but the walls were still sound. Gustavus was only three days' march distant. All looked well for Magdeburg. Tilly had, indeed, lost all hope of taking the place, but, still, with his usual tenacity, resolved on one final, desperate effort. On the 5th, the Imperialists' fire suddenly ceased, and the cannons were withdrawn from several of the batteries. These symptoms lulled the garrison into a fatal security. The tired guards on the ramparts snatched an hour for the sleep they so much needed. Tilly had already arranged an assault at gun-fire on the 10th of May, but the ruthless general, to the last moment doubtful of success, held another council, and arranged to make the attempt two hours later. Pappenheim was to try and storm the new town, where the dry ditch was shallow and the rampart sloped favourably outward. The town guard was asleep. Pappenheim's fierce Walloons clambered up about seven A.M. with little trouble. Falkenberg, who was at the Stadt Haus, just sending back Tilly's second trumpeter, roused by the fire of musketry, hurried with all the force he could get together to the gate of the new town. Beaten back at this point, the

brave Swede flew to another quarter, where a second escalade had begun, and there he fell. The citizens, hurrying to arms, and astonished at the sudden rattle of muskets and the clash of alarm-bells, became confused In the mean time two other gates, being deserted by the guards, who hurried to help their friends, were forced in, but the resistance was still vigorous, furious, and hopeful, till four Imperial regiments, winning the ramparts, fell with wild cries upon the rear of the garrison. Amidst all the tumult, a brave captain of Magdeburg, named Schmidt, drove the enemy back towards the gates; but he soon fell, and with him the last hope. Before noon all the works were carried, and the town lay at Tilly's feet. Two gates were then thrown open, and the main army admitted. The soldiers instantly occupied the principal streets, and, pointing loaded cannon, forced the citizens into their houses, there to await their fate. Tilly casting his soldiers loose, rapine, lust, and murder revelled for several days. In a single church fifty-three women were found beheaded. The Croats, then half savages, amused themselves by throwing children into the burning houses, while Pappenheim's brutal Walloons stabbed babes and their mothers with the same thrust. When some officer, horror-struck, reminded Tilly that he had still the power to stop the carnage, he said: "Return in an hour; I will see what I can do. The soldier must have some reward for his danger and his toils." The fires, first kindled by the Imperialists to divert the resistance of the citizens, soon raged so fiercely, that the soldiers were driven back to their camps. In less than twelve hours the populous and flourishing German city was almost literally reduced to ashes. The Administrator and four hundred of the richer burgomasters were saved, to extort from them ransom. When Tilly's thin, long, Mephistophelian face, crowned by the small, high-peaked hat and streaming red feather, appeared in the streets of Magdeburg, thirty thousand citizens had been already butchered, and six thousand bodies thrown into the Elbe to clear the roadways. On the fourth day the plunder of the half-consumed houses ceased. About one thousand people, huddled in the cathedral, and who had been three days without food and in fear of death, were dragged before Tilly. The next day a solemn mass was sung, and cannons roared the responses. "Since Jerusalem," says Niemand, "Satan had never held such a holiday as he had done for those three days in unhappy Magdeburg." Not long after, at Leipzig, Gustavus revenged the unhappy city by routing Tilly, who lost seven thousand men and five thousand prisoners, all his cannon, and one hundred standards. In a later battle the savage general fell from a Swedish bullet.

The siege and storming of Ciudad Rodrigo, in 1812, was one of the most dashing and gallant exploits of the English in the Peninsular War. This old fortress, on the north-west frontier of Spain, had originally been built by the Visigoths, as a bulwark against Portugal. The town was specially strong, since there was no bridge over the Agueda but that in the town, and at certain seasons the river was so swollen by the mountain torrents that it was impossible to throw any pontoons or flying bridges over it. Wellington, having fortified Almeida as a depôt, began the investment of the town of Rodrigo on the 8th of January, 1812. Our army, including cavalry, numbered about thirty-five thousand, the siege materials were piled at Gallegos, Villa del Coervo. and Espeja, and the ammunition was ready at Almeida. Seventy pieces of ordnance had been collected at Villa de Ponte, but, from the scantiness of transports, thirty-eight guns only could be brought to the trenches, and but for eight thousand shot found amidst the ruins of Almeida, the ammunition would have run short. The native drivers taking two days to bring their carts over the flat and excellent roads, created a delay in the operations. In the mean time the French strengthened the old works, and fortified two convents, which protected the suburbs. They also raised an enclosed and palisaded redoubt on the greater Teson, and this redoubt was strengthened by two guns in a Franciscan convent, and by a howitzer on the convent's flat roof. When the investment began, the French officers, treating it at first as a sham, came out under the convent wall, and at half musket-shot saluted and bowed to our soldiers. Wellington the same evening ordered the redoubt to be stormed; he was quite in earnest. The light divison, and Pack's Portuguese brigade, having forded the Agueda about three miles above the fortress, made a circuit, and took post till dusk behind the great Teson. In the evening the troops stood to their arms, and a detachment of one hundred volunteers from each regiment, led by Lieutenant-Colonel Colborne of the Fifty-

second, stormed the Francisco Hill fort after a short sharp action. The French officer in command proved to have been one of the mockers of the morning. This storming was done at a dash. An eye-witness describes our redcoats as appearing to be at the same moment in the ditch, near the parapet, on the ramparts, and forcing the gorge of the redoubt, at a gate which a bursting French shell blew open by a lucky accident. The French had calculated that this outwork would keep us at bay for three weeks, and its capture enabled us to break ground at once within breaching distance of the walls. Our loss was only twenty-four men and officers. Working parties were instantly set to work to dig themselves under cover, as the fort was swept by the fire of the town. Sir Thomas Graham now took direction of the siege, and the next night the first parallel was established; the batteries, eighteen feet thick at the top, were traced out under incessant storms of shells, but our riflemen dug pits in front of the trenches, and picked off the enemy's gunners. On the night of the 13th, a fortified convent near the captured redoubt was carried by a detachment of light infantry companies, supported by Lord Blantyre's brigade. A lodgment was effected here, and the sap run on to the line of the second parallel. Wellington, now beginning to fear that Marmont might relieve the place, resolved on a rush at Ciudad. On the 14th twenty-five of our heavy guns battered at the San Francisco convent, which enfiladed the approaches, and the Fortieth Regiment carrying them at a run, established a hold on the suburbs. On the 17th the wall began to crumble in large pieces, and the turret was shaken at the small breach, which the French re-intrenched. Still the heavy French fire ruined our sap, drove the riflemen out of their pits, and killed General Borthwick, our commandant of artillery. On the 19th the battering guns were turned against the rampart cannon, and a storm was agreed upon. The main breach was to be assailed by General Picton's division, consisting of the brigades of Major-General Mackinnon and Lieutenant-Colonel Campbell. This column was to be preceded by a storming party of the light companies of the division, under Major Manners of the Seventy-fourth, while, on the right, Lieutenant-Colonel O'Toole, with five companies of the Ninety-fifth Rifle Corps, and the light companies of the Eighty-third and Ninety-fourth, was to make a diversion. The storming party of three hundred men for the small breach was to be led by Major Napier of the Fifty-second, followed by the brigades of Major-General Vandeleur and Colonel Barnard, while General Pack was to make a false attack against the southern face of the fort.

At dusk at the given signal, the different columns marched calmly to the assault over the glacis, which was swept by grape and musketry, and lit by thousands of fire-balls. Most of the Portuguese sack-bearers, who had to fill up the ditch, here lay down behind their bags, and waited for better times. Colonel Campbell, with the Ninety-fourth and the second battalion of the Fifth, to assist Mackinnon's storming party, descended the counterscarp by means of ropes, and reached the breach silently and undiscovered. Finding the storming party not yet come, Colonel Campbell at once pushed forward to the breach. The colonel, hearing the French giving orders to the artillerymen to fire, shouted to his men to throw themselves on their faces; the next instant a fury of shot and shell swept over them, and they sprang to their feet, poured onward, and cleared the breach. A wide ditch having been cut by the French between the breach and the rampart, all might have been lost at this crisis, had not the French pioneers left a single plank, by which our troops passed up to the ramparts, driving away the gunners, and carrying all before them. But victory was not yet certain, and Mackinnon's party had not yet arrived. The French recovered from their panic, and were overwhelming our force. Men and officers fell in heaps, and choked the way, which was raked from minute to minute by two guns, which, only a few yards off, flanked the top of the breach. Colonel Campbell was equal to the emergency; he gave the word for a volley, and then charged. The French threw down their arms and fled. The moment after, Mackinnon's columns swept upwards to the breach through a destructive fire, but unfortunately a powder magazine exploding upon the rampart, Mackinnon and many of his followers were killed.

Nor could a Napier be backward on such a day. The light division storming party, with three hundred yards to clear, to get at the smaller breach, would not wait for the hay-bags to pad the ditch, but with extraordinary swiftness, eager for the battle, flew to the crest of the glacis, jumped headlong down the scarp, a fall of eleven feet, and rushed up the fausse-

braye under a smashing fire of grape and musketry. The bottom of the ditch being dark and intricate, the forlorn hope took too much to the left, but the storming party went straight to the breach, which was so small that a gun placed lengthways at the top nearly blocked it up. Here the forlorn hope joined the stormers, but the enemy's fire was so hot, and the passage so narrow, that the leaders wavered for a moment, and in the instinct of self-defence, every man snapped his musket. Major Napier had his arm shattered by a grape shot, but he still called out, "Men, trust to your bayonets!" and all the officers simultaneously springing to the front, their men gave a furious shout, charged, and won the entrance. General Vandeleur's brigade, forming behind the convent, came down after them to the assault, but General Crawford was shot dead on the glacis, and Colonel Colborne was wounded. Pack and the Portuguese had also turned their false attack into a real escalade, and the town was now carried at all points. The garrison fought for a moment in the streets, but soon threw away their arms, and flew to the castle, where Lieutenant Gurwood received the sword of the governor. And all this took place in half an hour; but then had not Wellington in the night order for the assault, said, "Ciudad Rodrigo *must* be stormed this evening?" The excesses were as disgraceful as those, subsequently, at Badajoz. Disarmed men were brutally shot, houses were fired, cellars sacked, and women dishonoured, till some of our officers stopped the insane and reckless firing by beating the men about the head with broken musket barrels, the only kind of logic they could understand in their drunken and savage fury. Six deserters were shot. Our total loss amounted to thirteen hundred killed and wounded. The garrison lost three hundred men, and we took fifteen hundred prisoners, and one hundred and fifty pieces of artillery. For this brilliant achievement, Wellington was made Duke of Ciudad Rodrigo and Earl of Wellington, with an annuity of two thousand pounds a year.

After this success, Wellington for the third time flew at Badajoz. This town stands between the Rivillas, a small stream, and the Guadiana, a feeble river, and spreads out like a fan its eight strong bastions. Phillippon, with a garrison of French, Hessians, and Spaniards, nearly five thousand strong, had made great preparations for resistance, and food had been stored for three months. The battering train was of fifty-two pieces, but Wellington would not bombard the place, or inflict cruel and useless destruction. Our engineers broke ground on the 17th of March. It was at last resolved to storm the Picurina, a fort on an isolated hill some eight hundred yards from the walls. Our storming party took this strong-work in an hour, with a loss of fifty-four men killed, twenty-five officers and two hundred and fifty men wounded. A few weeks later, Wellington, dreading Soult's advance from Cordova and Marmont's attack on Ciudad Rodrigo, resolved on storming Badajoz. Picton's fighting and desperate division was to scale the castle, Leith, the bastion of San Vincente. In the centre, the fourth and light divisions, under Colville and Andrew Barnard, were to march on the Santa Maria and the Trinidad breaches. The assault began at ten o'clock. The attack on the castle was at first repulsed by showers of heavy stones, trunks of trees, and bursting shells. The second assault was successful, but Colonel Ridge, the brave leader, fell in the castle gateway. The garrison fled down into Badajoz. "No man," says fiery Napier, "died that night with more glory than Ridge; yet many died, and there was much glory." At the great breach ponderous firm-set beams were chained together, and spiked with sword-blades. Powder barrels were rolled on our men, and an incessant and withering fire maintained. Two thousand of our bravest men had fallen, when Wellington gave the order to retire and re-form for a second assault. At this crisis some of Walker's men discovered a weak point in the bastion of San Vincente, and broke in. The town then fell, and the atrocities of an ungovernable army began. Five thousand men and officers fell during this siege, and in the assault three thousand five hundred men were wounded, and sixty officers and more than seven hundred men were slain. Five generals were wounded, and two thousand men were killed in the breaches, the Forty-third and Fifty-second regiments of the light division losing more men than all the seven regiments of the third division engaged at the castle. "Let it be remembered," says Napier, "that this frightful carnage took place in a space of less than a hundred yards square. That the slain died, not all suddenly, or by one manner of death. That some perished by steel, some by shot, some by water; that some were crushed and mangled by heavy weights, some trampled

upon, some dashed to atoms by the fiery explosions; that for hours this destruction was endured without shrinking, and that the town was won at last; these things considered, it must be admitted that a British army bears with it an awful power."

BLUFF HARRY.

"Would you like to be presented to Henry the Eighth?" suddenly inquired Charley Beagle, who was dining beside me at the club.

"Ahem! Immediately?"

"You will find him a most agreeable fellow, for a king," said my friend, perhaps mistaking the cause of my momentary hesitation. "If curt, he is courtly, and, though bluff, benevolent. His attachment, for example, to his 'Katie,' as he invariably calls her——"

"Which of them?"

"Arragon, I fancy. His devotion to that woman, I say, is perfectly romantic!"

"Better late than never," I ventured to remark. "But how do you know?"

"By his constant reference to her, on any point or in any position of difficulty," replied Charley. "I tell you, sir, to see Henry's obstinate, self-willed, Tudor nature yielding an almost childlike deference to the gentler though better-balanced spirit, is a lesson to the age."

"It is to be regretted that he did not adopt that commendable course a little sooner. Do I not remember something of a letter, penned by one, dying heart-broken at Kimbolton, which was said to have extracted 'one tear' from the receiver's heart, a circumstance (writes an uncourtly chronicler) which must have raised hopes at the time that the process of extracting blood from a stone might not be found impossible?"

"Ha, well!" said Charley Beagle, "circumstances alter. Henry, situated as he now is, frankly and unreservedly acknowledges the excellence of his spouse, and is never weary of her society and counsel. What more can you expect?" continued Charley, rather warmly.

"My dear fellow, I did not expect half so much. But you spoke of his majesty's situation. Is that, do I understand, satisfactorily ascertained?"

"You shall judge for yourself," said Beagle. "What are you doing to-night?"

"To-night! I—I—was going—— But what do you mean?"

"I mean that I have promised to attend a small privileged circle this evening, at which the king—who, indeed, rarely fails us—is expected to be present, and, if you will accompany me, I will be your master of the ceremonies," said Charley, smiling.

"Where is the reception held?"

"At Mrs. Hawkshawe's, Twelve, Buzzard-buildings, near the Mother Redcap, Hampstead-road, East. Nine, sharp," said Charley, rising.

"Dress?"

"Come as you are. It will be," remarked Mr. Beagle, "a quiet, earnest séance, for purposes of inquiry. Dark, colloquial, sedentary. You won't *see* the king, you know."

"No?"

"But," added Charley, laughing, "you will hear his rollicking voice plainly enough, I can tell you! He sometimes comes with a view-hallo, and once gratified us much (after consulting Katie) by taking part in a melody originally composed in his own honour:

> The hunt is up, the hunt is up,
> And it is now full day;
> Harry our king is gone hunting,
> To drive the stag to bay.

You might have heard him at Trafalgar-square!"

"Good. I will meet you here at eight-thirty."

Was Charley Beagle a believer in spiritual phenomena? No man could say. If taxed with such a faith, Charley winked, and winked again. If his non-belief were taken for granted, he assumed a staid and scientific look, muttered mysterious nothings about psychological conditions, undetermined laws of nature, &c., &c., and recommended inquirers to investigate for themselves.

Charley happened to be travelling in America when the spiritual epidemic declared itself with great virulence at Boston, United States. The temptation of conversing with a number of distinguished (deceased) persons, whose acquaintance he had, with some reason, despaired of making in the flesh, overcame all scruples. Mr. Beagle attended a good many séances, and if what passed did not tend to augment his respect for the illustrious shades who, on the half-dollar nights, seldom failed to reveal their presence, his sense of humour was tickled to the last degree.

That he was occasionally startled is true. There was one especial shade, which appeared to have devoted its whole time

and talents to becoming acquainted with Charley's private worldly affairs, and now displayed its knowledge with a frankness really annoying. Mr. Beagle began to dislike and snub that meddlesome film; but it would seem that this class of spirit is easier raised than laid. He was beginning to grow seriously uneasy, when a fortunate incident occurred. The spirit suddenly announced, one evening, that it had come accompanied by a relative of Mr. Beagle's, lately deceased. "Who was it?" "His aunt." Charley calmly replied that it might possibly be his grandmother. As to an aunt, the blessing of such a relative had been denied him. The spirit, aunt and all, withdrew in confusion, and returned no more.

On returning to England, Mr. Beagle published one of the first works on spiritualism issued in this land. It excited some controversy. The public, who perused the book, said that the writer believed. The critics (who didn't) said he did not.

The author's own expressed views failed to settle the question. In the club smoking-room, Charley was reported to have pronounced the whole thing "beastly humbug." In a different circle, Mr. Beagle declared the subject "pregnant with interest," and, with the aid of an old aphorism, deprecated a too hasty judgment.

"'There came in,'" quoted Charley, "'a wise man and a fool. The wise man heard, investigated, and decided. The fool decided.'"

From what has been stated, it will be seen that Charley, if a believer, was, at all events, no bigot, and I therefore placed myself with the greater readiness under his guidance. What followed I will endeavour to relate with the closest possible adherence to fact.

Had King Harry, while in his very substantial flesh, been apprised that he was destined to spend many evenings at No. 12, Buzzard-buildings, near the Mother Red-cap, Hampstead-road, East, and that the majority of the distinguished persons invited to meet him would arrive by the twopenny 'bus, he would probably have expressed his incredulity in terms more significant than polite. How, then, if it had been added that the privilege aforesaid would be appraised at three and sixpence a head, to the profit of the host? "Body o' me!" would the offended monarch have roared to his informant. "The fellow is both fool and traitor! Had I quarter-staff at hand, I would crack it over thy knave's pate, beshrew me!"

Buzzard-buildings, if not actually situated in a Court suburb, is—when you find it—a very nice place; and Mr. and Mrs. Hawkshawe, the proprietors of No. 12, are, both in manners and appearance, very nice people. The gentleman is understood to be the grand, passive medium, the lady the active, managing, or (to use the technical term) "complementary," medium, establishing the "rapport" between the circle and the former.

We were about fourteen in number. Of these five or six were friends of Beagle, though strangers to the phenomena we had come to witness. There was a professor, but of what craft or science did not clearly appear. There was a doctor of medicine, a refined and gentle-mannered old lady, and, furthermore, a hard-headed solicitor, with a quick and searching manner that boded ill for any trickery that might be attempted. There were also two or three more, who seemed to be already familiar with the ways and manners of spiritualism. With these latter, Charley Beagle, having put on his scientific mask, freely fraternised, and moved among them without exciting the least distrust.

The circle was now formed, in an inner drawing-room, around a long table, on which was laid a large sheet of brown paper folded in the form of a speaking-trumpet, and, the lights being extinguished, we were left in total darkness.

The first sound audible, after a faint giggle, which was rebuked by a general "Hush!" was the voice of Mrs. Hawkshawe inviting us to rise and join in repeating the Lord's Prayer.

Had we known all that was to follow such a preface, it is probable that some members of the circle would have objected to its use. As it was, the solemn words were uttered with (apparently) all the reverence which is their due; after which, the complementary medium, assuming an ordinary tone, informed us that the spirits rather relished an easy, cheerful circle, and invited us to offer any remarks we chose.

"Such of my hearers" (used Artemus Ward to observe) "as have been confined in Newgate, will remember," &c. &c. Such of the readers of this serial who have acquired the habit of consulting spirits, will remember the style of conversation that precedes the actual phenomena. The condition of the atmosphere, as affecting the prospects of the present séance; the possibility of any repugnant influence being present; the capricious, skittish, and,

indeed, reprehensible behaviour of Dolly Brown (a spirit), at such and such a meeting; the commendable interest evinced by Count Bobboli, or the Baron von Giggle, in the phenomena; together with the count's very natural astonishment, when his brother (hailing through the brown-paper speaking-trumpet from an island in the South Pacific) announced that he was not residing in Paris, as had been supposed, but had been wrecked on an undiscovered reef, and buried under a tamarind-tree, some sprays of which would arrive by the next packet, in proof of the assertion. Surprise, congratulation, and low comments. After these, a lull, when the medium (Mrs. Hawkshawe), in a cajoling tone, reminded the spirits that time, though nothing to them, was still a matter of some concern to us.

"Now, spirits, now then, darlings; where are you? Don't keep us long waiting, there's dears."

I was conjecturing how Bluff Harry would respond to an invitation so expressed, when the hard-headed man of law abruptly inquired: "May I ask if there be any absolute necessity for total darkness, and the retaining our seats?"

"Your question, my excellent friend, though a discreet one, will cost you yours," whispered Charley the experienced. And so it did.

"We should infinitely prefer the light," said Mrs. Hawkshawe, sweetly. "But the spirits have announced certain conditions, and if these are disregarded, we get no results."

"Ha! probably not," said the inquirer, dryly.

"Come, spirits, spirits!" said the medium, briskly. "What is the meaning of this? If you won't speak, answer by the table. Is the circle to your satisfaction?"

An emphatic thump. (No.)

"What changes shall be made?"

Reply being unthumpable, none was made, and it became expedient to inquire, seriatim: "Am I right?" &c.

Three thumps (affirmative), until it came to the turn of the man of law, when a tremendous "No."

"I am extremely sorry, sir," said the voice of Mrs. Hawkshawe, through the gloom, "but I fear that, unless you will do us the favour of walking into the next room, our spiritual atmosphere will remain imperfect."

The lawyer hesitated, thought, perhaps, of his three and sixpence, then of his friends' disappointment, and politely withdrew, under a promise not to open the door, but with liberty to glean what he might through the key-hole.

One or two changes then took place, the result of which placed me—the writer—next the medium, and the refined old lady (who was nervous and prostrated) at the opposite end of the table, in a very isolated and forlorn condition indeed. But there was no appeal, and the spirits had to be obeyed.

Silence again prevailed.

"Do they ever fail entirely?" asked a half-sceptical voice, in the dark.

"Scarcely ever," replied the medium. "Only yesterday, Count Bobboli was saying to the Baron von Giggle, that he never—— Well, this is most extraordinary! Stay. If any of the company would favour us—— Vocal harmony soothes and attracts them. Can anybody sing?"

Dead silence, and sniffing.

"Suppose we try a chorus," suggested the medium. "Auld lang Syne?"

We did. But the spirits, perhaps not recognising our claim to "auld acquaintance," remained unmoved.

"Try a single voice," said somebody, at a venture.

"I have heard," some one else politely observed, "that a lady present, Mrs. Pammelton Gurle, has a charming voice. If she would oblige us——"

Rather to my surprise, there arose from the further end of the table a sort of nervous twitter, like several sparrows, each with a severe cold, attempting a part song, and breaking down. It was good-natured Mrs. Pammelton Gurle essaying a ditty, popular no doubt in her youthful days: The Spell is broken, We must part.

It was more pathetic than apt. We were intent rather upon weaving a spell, and by no means disposed to "part" till we had succeeded.

There was a dark buzz, which might be interpreted, at pleasure, as applause or relief, but through it came pealing a loud and rough, yet muffled, voice, as if through a speaking-trumpet:

"Brayvo, old lady!"

"Ha! the spirits!" "At last! 'Tis John!" "Welcome, John!" "Now we shall hear something!" exclaimed voices of the initiated.

"*What* John, Charley?" I asked, innocently. "King John?"

"No, no!" said Charley, "John King. It's the spirit that was so much with the Davingpodges, you know."

"Aha!" said I.

"Well, John, here you are at last!" said

the medium, cheerfully. "You frightened us. We thought you would not come. Is the circle all right?"

"No, it isn't," bellowed plain-spoken John,

"What's the matter?"

"Heverything," responded John, in a sullen roar.

"You are out of sorts, I think. Where's Harry?"

"Don't know, and don't care. With Katie, perhaps. He ain't tied to my hapron-string! Perhaps he'll come by-and-bye," added John, relentingly.

"Can't you call him up, sir?" inquired a timid voice.

"They object to the expression 'up,'" put in the complementary medium.

"I beg pardon," said the timid voice; "I—didn't mean——"

"Put any questions any one pleases," said the medium.

"Ahem! Where's my wife?" demanded a stern, quiet voice, down the table.

"You ain't got never a one," said John, "and you wouldn't know 'ow to treat her, if you 'ad."

There was a giggle, and John, exultant in a lucky guess, celebrated his triumph by dealing blows indiscriminately, right and left, with the brown-paper trumpet, in the dark. Mr. King's manners certainly lacked repose.

"You want Harry here, to keep you in order," observed the medium.

"Well," said a new voice, rising, as it were, from the very centre of the table, "Harry is here!"

I fear I cannot convey a correct idea of this second voice. To my fancy, it was such as might have proceeded from an exceedingly choky and corpulent imp, gulping out half-articulate words in intervals of sea-sickness. The being from which it emanated seemed to be staggering, hither and thither, about six inches above the table.

Several questions were put to the royal shade, but owing to the peculiarity of the voice, which seemed to proceed direct from Harry's stomach, without troubling any other organ, I could not make out the first replies.

"These vocal phenomena are highly instructive, sir," said (I think) the professor to me.

"They are, sir," I replied. "Especially when intelligible."

"When did my father die?" asked a voice. It was the lawyer's. He had broken his parole, and quietly resumed his seat. But the mysterious influence that had required his absence was manifestly unconscious of his return.

"Never," was the decided reply.

"Yet he died in my arms."

"No he didn't," said Bluff Harry.

The medium explained that, according to spiritualistic views, there is no such thing as death, only a migration from sphere to sphere.

"I see. Well, when did he quit this sphere?" asked the determined querist.

At this moment a hoarse call, or bellow, resounded along the table.

"Ah, the bo'sen!" said Mrs. Hawkshawe. "It's the bo'sen of the Captain. Well, bo'sen, what have you to say to us?"

Dead silence.

"Perhaps," suggested a voice, "he has come to thank us for the provision made for his wife and family."

"Hush, please," said the medium. "They dislike to have their business suggested to them. I'm afraid he is gone."

He was.

"Harry, are you gone?"

"No. I'm here," gurgled the monarch.

"Will you—will your majesty permit me to ask," said a voice I didn't know, "what is your real opinion of Cardinal Wolsey?"

"He was a great man," replied King Henry, speaking from the pit of his stomach. "My stay, my comforter."

"His linsey-*woolsey*, that is," put in, emboldened by the dark, some student of the Comic History of England.

"Ho—ho—ho!" roared John King, who had been silent of late. "Tell that to Katie!"

"Hold your tongue?" growled Harry.

"Shan't," said uncourtly John.

"Pray, may I ask, do you play whist down there?" inquired a gentlemanly voice.

The medium remarked that "down there" was open to the same objection she had mentioned in connexion with "up."

The querist apologised, and repeated his question, to which Bluff Harry replied in the affirmative, and that the points were high.

"Do they practise calling for trumps?" pursued Mr. M. (He was a member of my club, and a fanatic of whist.)

"I don't remember," growled Harry. "I'll ask Katie."

"Can they see in the dark?" asked a member of the circle.

"They cannot see at all," said the medium. "A peculiar psychological con-

dition, acted upon with energy by the secundo-primary properties, produces in them an effect analagous to what we call 'sight.'"

"Ay, ay?" said Charley, as if a new light had dawned upon him.

As King Harry positively refused to reply to any questions of the least importance without consulting Katie, and as there existed a strong impression that, having once sought that lady's society, his majesty would not return, we ceased to press him, and the conversation resolved itself into a passage of arms between himself and John King, in which the latter was worsted.

A little nervous shriek from Mrs. Pammelton Gurle next alarmed the circle. Somebody, the old lady declared, had touched her!

Was she hurt? Was she frightened?

No, not at all. But a hand was placed round her neck, and the liberty, more than the touch, had wounded her.

It seemed time to close the séance. Bluff Harry and John King had both retired; but the spirits appeared disposed to turn the table, and the medium invited us to witness that, before we broke up. The table was turned entirely upside down, as the light, when turned on, exhibited to us. It was so large and heavy that, the medium assured us, it would require three strong men to effect what had been done.

But our friend the lawyer, having declared he could do it alone, was permitted to try, and performing his task with perfect ease, the miracle collapsed.

Thus ended the séance in Buzzard-buildings. As a novelty, it was amusing; as a farce, poor; as an "inquiry," below contempt. If the spirits be otherwise than mortal humbugs, it is unlucky indeed for the honest films, that the two conditions they insist upon, as essential to their demonstration, are precisely those which render complete demonstration impossible.*

MORNING ON THE MOUNTAINS.

THE pale blue mist lies on the mountain crest,
Wraps the fir-forests in a dewy shroud,
And veils the shimmering lake. The red deer wakes
And rises from his lair, and tossing high
His branchèd head, treads o'er the velvet moss,
Launching his deep-toned challenge on the air.
The harebells quake, sway their blue coronals,
What time the breeze of dawn, piercing and keen,
Sweeps o'er their heathery bed. The ptarmigan
Springs startled up, as dropping fir-cones fall
Upon his couch of leaves. The russet hare,
Her long ears pricked, leaps from her last night's form,
And bounding o'er the glade, is lost to sight.
Within the whins, the red-legged coveys crouch,
And fear not sportsman's gun. Scarce e'er does foot
Of man crush down the few green blades that grow
Upon these distant, solitary wilds.
Morning breaks o'er the mountains, keen and cold,
Bracing the nerves, and sweeping from the brain
The misty cobwebs of continuous thought,
Giving to thews and sinews double strength,
Once more to bear the burdens of the day.

* This narrative embodies the incidents, as faithfully as memory can supply them, of a séance at which the writer was lately present in London, names and places alone disguised.

IN THE FIELD WITH THE PRUSSIANS.

A CONVOY CAPTURED, AND HOW WE ESCAPED.

"Now, then, are you ready?" called out Baumstein, a dashing Uhlan officer, to a man who was trying to improvise some harness for a horse which had broken the traces of a provision waggon.

"Not yet, sir," was the man's answer. "The traces have had a deal of wear and tear, and want looking to in a great many places."

"Well, I know you would not keep the column of waggons waiting if you had not good reason for it; but you must really be quick, for you know orders are to be at Etain (half way between Metz and Verdun) at twelve, and it only wants an hour to it now."

The vehicles were regular army provision waggons for the most part, but there were also several "required" French carts. The official waggons were all marked in the following way on their canvas coverings: "Proviant Wagen, Numbers One, Two, Three, &c., Brandenburg Infantrie Division." The two drivers to each waggon were soldier postilions, each of whom had his loaded musket at his side, so that, if occasion required it, they had but to cut the rope traces of the cart, and there was at once a small squadron of horse ready for more military duties. The waggons were each drawn by two pairs of horses, which were remarkably fine, strong beasts, and, if it were necessary, they were fully capable of dragging the heavy loaded waggons at the rate of six miles an hour the whole day through. The provisions carried were for the most part countless loaves of black bread, and ham salted and dried, which is all the Germans require. Several of the waggons, however, were full of grain.

At last the trace was mended to the soldier's satisfaction, and the young lieutenant sent an under-officer to the front to say that waggon number one might proceed. There was a cracking of whips, mingled with each soldier's particular noise for urging on his

beasts, and the whole column started, the horses' hoofs striking sparks from the stones in the little village as they passed, and the heavy waggon wheels crunching many a hard flint to powder.

The village was one of those dreary, desolate-looking places which one finds too often near a newly-fought battle-field. Window-frames, with portions of glass still sticking in them, flapped listlessly to and fro; doors, partially battered down, lay transversely across the apertures they were intended to cover; large patches of blue sky showed through the roofs of many of the houses, while the yellow-plastered walls, speckled with bullet and shell marks, were in several places clotted with blood. Such was the village on the road to Etain at which we had stopped, and, now that we had set out again, the country opened before our view in all the glory of summer sunshine. Far and near was one immense space of open ground, interspersed by villages and broad magnificent roads.

Any one who has seen France can scarcely have failed to have noticed that it is a country wonderfully appropriate for the purposes of war. Its broad plateaux and open spaces court the evolutions of an army, while its straight, broad, endless chaussées seem built for the purpose of hosts marching to one or other of its frontiers. In England we have our narrow lanes, our endless hedges; but France abjures such cumberers of the ground, and, in an eminently scientific manner, sets to work to build a straight, broad road, and let it cost what it may, or whatever difficulties may be in the course indicated for it to take, they are surmounted with a celerity and adroitness that does the French infinite credit.

The chaussée by which we approached Etain was just such a road as seemed to have been built on the foregoing principle; it was some fifty yards wide, and as straight as a line. On either side beautiful lime-trees, planted at regular intervals, cast their broad cool shadows across the glaring white of the chalky road. Here and there single carrion crows, and magpies in flocks, were busily at work on the open ground to the right and left of the road. Ah! what an awful feast they had as they dug their long beaks into the ground, and then cawed and chattered over their meal. It was a strange thing, but I certainly noticed that all innocent birds seemed to have entirely disappeared, while these vultures of temperate climes swarmed for many a mile over the open ground.

The column now came to the little village of Jarny, and here some Prussian officers "required" a waggon with a pair of horses, and I was given a seat in it. We had previously been sitting on one of the provision waggons. The Frenchman from whom the cart and horses were "required" was told to send a boy with them to drive, and as he was a long time in finding one, the provision column had got on some way before we started again. On reaching Conflans we found the convoy had not stopped, but had trotted through the town.

Conflans was not an interesting-looking town, but it bore no appearance of desolation, as the villages that we had just passed had done. Its inhabitants seemed quietly to have submitted to the Prussian yoke, and were busied at their daily occupations. The shops were open, and, although trade could not be said to be flourishing, it was still going on. The crowd of German troops in the town was immense; stand after stand of arms appeared, piled in fours, with the spiked helmets on the bayonets, down all the side streets. Some were piled in front of the churches, others were opposite the hotels and large buildings. There must have been several thousand men in this little town. The church I saw was entirely cleared out; the altar and pews were all gone, and in their place straw was strewn over the floor. On this several hundred Prussian soldiers, rolled up in their great-coats, with their knapsacks serving them as pillows, lay fast asleep. Two men kept guard over the arms outside, which are so piled that every man, if alarmed, has not the slightest difficulty in finding his weapon. An alarm was given that the French were coming while I was looking round the church, and the order and quickness displayed by the men in turning out was something wonderful. The alarm was beaten through the town by a drummer. As soon as the sentries heard it they woke a young lieutenant, who was sleeping on the straw by the side of his men. He sprang up, and shouted, "Stand to your arms!" Without speaking a word, they all rose like one man, just as if they had all been shamming sleep, and had been expecting the alarm. They hastily rolled up their great-coats. In two minutes the knapsack was on each man's back, and the coat, rolled into sausage shape, the ends being fastened together by a little strap, was placed across each man's right shoulder. In the most silent manner they quickly left the church, and four men went to each pile of arms. When all were there the officer

gave the order to put on helmets and shoulder arms. The next minute they were in marching order; their movements were so quick, yet so mechanical, that they seemed to come from some accurate and beautiful piece of machinery. It turned out to be a false alarm, arising from a sentry, a mile off, firing his rifle. "Fall out, and pile arms," cried the lieutenant, and in five minutes the men were all on the straw again. The Prussian soldier makes a rule of sleeping whenever he gets the chance, and also of eating enough to last him three days, should fortune give him such an opportunity.

After half an hour's good trot we came up to the column again.

"Holloa," said the Uhlan officer, "we thought we had lost you. Where did you get those horses from? They are fine beasts."

"From Jarny," was the answer.

"How far is it to Etain now?"

"Why, it is a good hour's trot. We were to have arrived there by twelve, but it will be past one. I expect the old general will flay me alive. But since we left we have had nothing but disasters. In fact, I don't know where it is going to end. Well, Herr Engländer," said he to me, "where are you bound for?"

"I am going to the right of Verdun," I answered; "to a place called Magneville. I am told that the Second Army Corps is there, and if so I shall get the general commanding to give me leave to follow his ambulance into the next battle."

"It strikes me that our position here is not altogether safe. You know, we are not very far from Verdun," he answered. "No one seems to know where MacMahon is, and I, for one, have never yet been rightly told where to find a German regiment, division, or army corps, when I have inquired for one. It looks to me like inextricable confusion; but I suppose it will all turn out right. We have a good man at our head. He is like a spider in the middle of his web, and knows everything, while the meshes which form the web know nothing, but do their work just as well as if they did. Bazaine, the bluebottle, we have already got locked up pretty safely in Metz; but still there are some flies left which can sting."

At this moment a sergeant dashed up to the Uhlan officer's side to say that one of the wheels of the foremost provision waggon had come off, and just as we heard this the whole column came to a dead halt.

"Did you ever see anything like this?" said the Uhlan. "We shan't die in our beds if this goes on; we can't stop for the cart. Forwards."

And the waggons got in motion again, leaving the provision waggon with four men and some rope to make the defect temporarily good.

We soon reached Etain. That town was also full of troops. Here our waggon drew up at the Hôtel de la Couronne, whilst the Uhlan officer went to report himself to the general. The two Prussian officers with whom I had been travelling were also looking for the Second Army Corps. In a few minutes the Uhlan officer joined us in the hotel, and he was told to pass through the Second Army Corps, and that he would find his division half starving at the next village beyond.

We all determined the best thing to be done was to secure something to eat while the horses were munching their noonday meal; so calling the host of the hotel, my friends recommended him to be quick in serving us, unless he wanted——. The poor man was allowed to fill up the blank in any way that his imagination suggested, and in ten minutes we were served, although the place was crowded with officers, all of whom were as imperious in their demands as we had been.

Our repast consisted of a thick slice of villanously tough meat: the waiter called it beef; I called it horse, and I fancy I was right; but he would have been worse than a fool who, at that hour and that place, threw away the chance of getting a mouthful of meat, let it be what it might. Salad and bread completed the dinner, together with a bottle of Chablis vieux, so that we rose quite contented, and paid our twelve francs a piece (a disgraceful price even for war times), with a grin, which was a sign of more delight than some of the other officers' faces bore.

Most of them were storming for this, that, and the other; the waiters, two in number, always answered "Oui, messieurs," most politely, without ever attempting to note or fulfil a single order. They just simply took anything they could find ready in the kitchen, and pitched it down in turns on one or other of the tables, and ran away, with their fingers in their ears, for a fresh load, followed by a storm of abuse from all sides.

We gladly took our departure from this Babel, and set out on our road to Magneville. The Uhlan officer rode to the front to find out the way, and we brought up the rear of the column, as we had done

before. There is a feeling of safety about numbers, or else, had we been so inclined, we might have passed the other waggons, and gone on alone, but we chose remaining where we were. It was a good long way to Magneville, and after leaving Etain, we gave two or three tortuous windings out of the town, and then found ourselves on another long broad chaussée.

"What is the day of the month?" asked the Uhlan lieutenant.

"The twenty-eighth of August," was the answer.

And we moved on in silence till we reached Abducourt, which was a totally deserted village.

"It's very strange that there should be no Prussians quartered here," said one of the officers; "and if the Second Army Corps, numbering thirty-five thousand men, is to be supplied by the provision and ammunition waggons running up and down this road, they won't get fat on such fare; and as for their rifles and cannons, they might just as well pitch them away. Why, we have not met a single soldier or conveyance since we left the outposts before Etain."

Baumstein now rode up to us.

"We ought to get a by-road to the left, now," said this officer. "I was told I should find one after passing the first village, but I don't think the village was called Abducourt. I have lost my map, worse luck to it. What a nuisance it is! I hope we are all right."

"Before we go on any further," said an officer in the cart, "let us get out and light our cigars in one of these houses; there's too much wind to do it here."

The column did not stop in the village, but we told the lad to draw up, and descending, we made our way into a deserted house. It evidently belonged to some well-to-do farmer, who had left in a tremendous hurry; so much so, that the dinner, although placed upon the table, had been left untasted. There was an article in the code of war amongst these Germans, which was, that whenever a house was deserted, and there were any eatables or drinkables left in it, these were the legitimate property of the finder. There were two reasons by which such a proceeding was justified: one was, that when you had eaten one meal it was quite uncertain whether you would get another for days; and the other was, that if you left the eatables they would be sure to spoil, and that if you did not take the wine, some one else would.

Acting on these principles, we each took a bottle of wine and some very stale bread, and giving a bottle to our driver, whom we called Napoleon, from his likeness to the original, we started to catch up the proviant waggons, which we knew must now be a long way ahead of us. We ascended the cart, and the horses trotted gaily onwards; they were fine, strong beasts, with broad chests, and our driver, Napoleon, was a good, civil lad; he seemed in a terrible state of alarm, and although the Germans did nothing to cause him the least misgivings, he looked as if he expected every moment to be shot. He answered all the questions put to him in a very tremulous voice. One officer asked him where he was during the battle on the 18th.

"In the cellar," was the answer. "We were all there—father, mother, sisters, and myself; for the soldiers who passed to the front told us that if the Prussians gained the day, we should all be murdered; and that they always tied the men to trees, and then killed the women and children before their eyes."

"Did you ever hear anything like that?" said one of the Prussian officers.

We now came to an angle where two straight roads met. Just as we were turning the corner we caught the sound of firing, and we saw a riderless horse, five hundred yards off, coming along the road to meet us at a frightful speed; it was almost flying. Poor Napoleon nearly fainted. "Turn the horses!" we cried to him; but he was too far gone for that, so I sprang to the reins, and tugged with such haste that the waggon very nearly went over, but luck was with us. "Now, back you go," we said to Napoleon. He did not want telling twice. Far down the road we could see a confused mass of horses and waggons and puffs of smoke, and we could distinctly hear the sound of shots.

"Gott im Himmel," said the Prussians; "they have caught sight of us; off—off."

Napoleon lashed the horses into a perfect fury. The riderless horse was now close up to us. It was the Uhlan lieutenant's. As it was passing we could see a deep sword-cut across its neck, and the poor brute's chest was covered with blood. How it went! We must have been going at a splendid rate to have kept that beast, as long as we did, in sight, for it scarcely seemed to touch the ground; with neck stretched out, with bloodshot, rolling eyes, and foaming mouth, and nostrils widely dilated, it shot past us. Our horses took fright and followed it. It was a fearful drive. None of us expected to reach Etain

alive. We tore through the village, along the broad road; to the breadth of the road we owed our safety as much as to anything, for the horses, every now and then, made a fearful swerve, but still they kept on gallantly. Ever and anon we cast our glances behind us, but no horsemen appearing, we thought we were safe. The distance from the village to Etain was about five miles; we had got, perhaps, half of our perilous journey over, when we saw two horsemen coming after us as fast as they could tear.

"There are only two of them," said one of the Prussians; "take out your chassepots." We placed the straw and the two portmanteaus we had been sitting on at the back of the cart as a sort of barricade, and then took up positions behind it, so that our cart looked from behind nothing more than a simple cart with straw in it. Between the straw and the portmanteaus there was sufficient room to fire; and as both the officers had chassepots and a few dozen cartridges, as keepsakes of Gravelotte, we were fully prepared.

Our waggon was still going at a tremendous pace. We could see that the two horsemen were themselves followed by a troop of French horse, who were rapidly gaining on them. Presently, there were a few puffs of smoke from the French horsemen. One of the two pursued men fell, horse and all; the other kept on. He was better mounted than his pursuers, and had evidently been only keeping with the other, for directly his comrade's horse fell he bounded away, and came on after us at a tremendous pace. Our poor beasts were getting rapidly tired. We were now within two miles of Etain. The German horseman was still being pursued, but was rapidly distancing his pursuers, and quickly catching us up. In a few minutes he was alongside.

"Chasseurs! Chasseurs!" was all he said; and he dashed on.

Just as he passed we were able to see it was one of the sergeants, but he had got a cut over the head, and his face was covered with blood and dust to such an extent as to make him almost indistinguishable. Our eyes were now intently fixed on the body of chasseurs. There were somewhere about twenty of them; they seemed very tolerably mounted, and were quickly gaining upon us. Our horses were giving evident appearances of knocking up. We certainly imagined that our hour had come. We could distinctly see our chasseur friends' uniforms, and we were speculating whether it might not be wiser to pull up, when Napoleon called out, "Voilà, voilà!" We turned our eyes, and to our intense joy a troop of German Uhlans appeared. We were about midway between the two squadrons of hostile horse. The effect of this sight on the French was electrifying. They wheeled round, and, in their turn, were the pursued.

"Napoleon," we cried, "draw up at the side of the road."

As the Uhlans charged past us, we stood up in the cart, and gave them a loud cheer, and actually Napoleon joined in. They answered it. Their horses looked smoking hot, and rather jaded, as if they had already done a good morning's work, but still they seemed to have plenty of go in them as they dashed along. They did not continue the chase long, as they knew no doubt that more French would come out of Verdun. The officer's riderless horse had dashed into Etain, and had thereby given the alarm, upon which a party of Uhlans, just returning from reconnoitring, were sent out to see what was the matter; and, luckily for us, they came just at the right moment. When we reached Etain we found that we had taken the wrong road, and that the garrison of Verdun, instead of the poor Uhlan officer's division, was several waggon loads of provisions the richer by the mistake. The whole town was under arms; long rows of infantry and heavy squadrons of horse were drawn up waiting only the word of command. As we arrived, the order to "fall out," was given. Cannons were unlimbered, cavalrymen led their horses back to their stables once more, the infantry again piled their needle-guns before the houses they occupied, and in almost as short a time as it takes to relate it, the whole place was comparatively still. The sentries again mounted guard, and the officers returned to the hotels to talk over the bad luck which had attended "the captured convoy."

WANTED FOR LONDON.

All the enormous alterations that are taking place in London, vast works like the Embankment, Holborn Viaduct, and the new streets opened up near the Mansion House, carried out successfully, and with an almost Roman spirit, might seem worthy of the great City that boasts itself the capital of the world. Yet some of the busiest parts of London have an air of

shabbiness and meanness quite out of keeping with these grand efforts, and utterly unworthy of a city of such pretension.

What is wanted to remove these incongruities is a ready managing ædile; not a Haussman with vast plans and demolitions, but something akin to the clever, shifty, thrifty housekeeper in a moderate establishment. We want, in short, for London, the "handy man," with a light touch and artistic eye, and a not exorbitant balance to his credit in the municipal coffers. We should take him first to Trafalgar-square. There are grand soaring schemes for the beautifying or rather reconstruction of that really fine place; although it is certainly not quite the finest site in Europe. A skilful architect could, with alterations, make a handsome pile of the much abused National Gallery, or at least turn it into a respectable conventional building, that would fairly hold its own with the Post-Office, and buildings of such modest pretensions. There is no need for wholesale razing and abolishing. The stiff flagged portion of the square could be laid out with far more effect; a broad flight of steps should descend from the gallery; a little green should be judiciously introduced; above all, the awful statues should be sent for shelter to remote back streets or lonely suburbs. A fine chance was missed here a short time ago, when, by purchasing two or three old houses by Spring Gardens, an opening could have been made into St. James's Park. But a bank had more spirit, and purchased the ground. Private enterprise has often a nice instinct. Who that remembers the unrivalled squalor and decay of old Hungerford Market, but must acknowledge how much London is indebted to a company for the gay, cheery, and even stately Charing Cross Hotel, which has taken its place, and which has really lent a dignity to the neighbourhood. But the strangest thing is, that a street like the Strand, so busy and important, where such vast retail business is done, should still consist of old, rickety, tottering houses of an almost crazy senility, with even shops of the oldest pattern. Now, even in a provincial town, a perpetual restoration and stuccoing is going on, and almost every new tenant guts, and alters, and plasters his house, even for the prestige of the thing. Amazing, too, is the slowness with which improvements are adopted, whose value has been proved by experience elsewhere; and it is only worthy of an old-fashioned French town to have omnibuses and carriages hobbling laboriously over rude paving-stones, when for years back the success of asphalte has been established in Paris. This smooth and durable material, over which the vehicles literally glide, actually imparts a cheerfulness to the street, and we are not pained by the spectacle of toiling and straining horses, who under the new conditions seem to make child's play of their task. A small strip has indeed been laid down in Holborn, which seems to be already strangely worn into eddies and inequalities; but this, it is probable, comes from the originally imperfect construction of the roadway underneath, which must be old, and old-fashioned. The French surface remains as level as a billiard table. The day is not far distant when all our streets will be laid down with this wonderful material, which will add a new luxury to London life, will cheapen the cost of horseflesh and carriage material, by adding to their lasting powers, and will make us look back with wonder to the barbarous horrors of macadamisation.

One would think that clothing an official with decent taste was not a herculean task: yet ask a foreigner his opinion of the poor bemonstered force which protects our lives and purses. He might suppose that Dykwynkyn, or some other of the artists who work for the pantomimes, had designed the grotesque disfigurement of these unhappy men. The more ferocious in appearance carry off this grotesqueness by a sort of buccaneering or piratical air, they are so strapped, and gaitered, and hung about with objects. Yet a little ordinary practical sense, directed by even a meagre scrap of taste, would save us from ridicule. A little bronzed point or knob at the top of the helmet, in the Prussian fashion, would do something. The long buccaneering gaiters might be shortened one half, or combined with knickerbockers. The Dublin police have showy helmets, set off with German-silver chains, and patent leather; but the best model would be that of the gendarmerie in some parts of Germany—a stiff Tyrolean hat, stout as a helmet, with a plume of cock's feathers at the side.

Here is a suggestion for the new postmaster-general: How often does even an old inhabitant wander about the long streets looking for the post-office? Nay, how often does he not actually pass it, as he looks for the shrinking and over-modest openings which cower near the ground, and are obscured by the competing attractions of loaves or groceries? There should surely be some conspicuous signal, say a lamp-

post, painted some gay colour, that could be seen afar, to indicate the situation. Again, how vastly would a street like Regent-street be improved by a few stray kiosks, devoted to the sale of newspapers and postage-stamps; or, better still, by the postmaster-general enlarging his pillar-boxes, like one of those changes that take place in the comic business of the pantomime, and placing one of his smart little uniformed boys to sell the stamps and sort the letters, allowing him to supplement his efforts by the sale of newspapers?

It is plain, too, that the Embankment —a really fine and tasteful work—is scarcely likely to be developed as it ought to be. Even the ordinary road lamp-posts that light it are of a mean pattern, while the ambitious and highly decorated beacons that decorate the balustrade are too flashy. Inigo Jones's exquisite water-gate lies half buried in mud, and is growing dilapidated. Surely such an artistic object might be conveniently moved, and set up to do its proper function, instead of the gaunt and hideous thing at the Temple-stairs. But there is in this Embankment a grand opportunity for what might be called cheap out-door education: that is, for civilising the manners and tastes of the rough population of London. There is here a chance of teaching them that there is enjoyment outside the charmed circle of the public-house, which should, on no account, be neglected. These grounds should not be laid out into too precise an arrangement of trim flower-beds. There should be grass and walks, with a few statues, as in the Tuileries. There is something rather grim and cheerless in our public gardening, with the austere notices and the watching men. We should think of the sultry summer evenings, and make it into a lounge, with plenty of seats, from which to look on the river, and above all, a "grand café" or two, with a band playing.

We could not do better than follow the precedent of the Champs Elysées—which are turned to such charming purposes, and very fairly deserve the title—about ten o'clock, when all the lights are twinkling through the trees on some cool night, and the soft sound of music floats to us. A more rational way of spending an evening could not be conceived; and if the Embankment were turned to some such purpose, or if the experiment were tried even in a small way, it would probably answer quite as well with the London public. Of course a grim political economy will interpose. The Board of Works, or some such body, will say that such fooleries are no business of theirs. At most there will be "bedding out" of some gay flowers, with a great deal of iron railing and fencing.

Why are not the short cuts through the parks thrown open to vulgar cabs and omnibuses? In so republican a country as this, it seems the strangest and most invidious distinction that only "private carriages" should be tolerated. In Paris these plebeian conveyances boldly trundle through the Louvre, though it only saves them a length of a quarter of a mile. In fact, it is precisely analogous to the case of St. James's Palace, where there would be the short cut under the arch and by Stafford House, instead of going by Marlborough House. The parks would gain in animation by such an arrangement, and the public would be vastly convenienced.

This matter of the art education of the public might be attended to in many little matters. The London lamp-post, for example, is the dirtiest, ugliest object conceivable—sprawling, leaning over, unworthy even of a village. The Paris lamp-post is really a work of art, and though we might not afford to have our lamps of bronze, as in that fair city, we could have better models. Good models are no dearer than bad. Ugliness is not absolutely necessary to economy.

Finally, here is another suggestion to which the Post-Office is welcome. These local telegraphs, frequent deliveries, &c., are cumbrous and elaborately slow after all. Why not have a special messenger corps—light carts running every half-hour and calling at every post-office, with two or three postmen waiting their arrival at certain fixed points, who would start off and deliver the cards or letters, say within an hour from the most extreme points. We would soon come to know the beats of these flying cars and their feeders, and where we wanted specially rapid despatch, could employ them.

MISS PONSONBY'S COMPANION.

In Twelve Chapters.

CHAPTER VII. "FROM INFORMATION I RECEIVED."

Frank Tresham had already breakfasted, and was now busy in his surgery preparatory to starting on a round, which, commencing at Summerdene and Bracken, would close about half-past four o'clock at Miss Ponsonby's. At many houses that day he was to come as the herald of Hope or

the precursor of Death. Here the cradle would follow him, there the hearse. In his breast were locked up as many family secrets as are contained in the heart of a priest, but they did not trouble the young doctor, whose mind, especially just then, had pleasant thoughts on which to feed, and never indulged in morbid retrospection.

The old kitchen clock had just, with a good deal of parade, defiantly struck ten, and Dandy, perfectly aware that there would very soon be a start, was dashing out every moment to the stable to bark at Beauty and hurry George. Tresham, standing behind the surgery counter, was making up a draught, now and then turning round to consult the long rows of labelled drawers behind him, like an organist about to try a new stop. Some leeches near him, in a dark bottle, wriggled and waved uneasily, dumbly craving for food and employment, and a cross light, from a window that looked into the garden, fell in a golden gleam on a full bottle of some sherry-coloured tincture that stood by the pestle and the huge mortar over which George spent many a toilsome hour. Death in many forms lurked in those rows of bottles drawn up in rank and file behind Tresham, at which a dusty skull, half hidden among a bush of dried herbs, like King Charles in the oak, grinned and glowered sarcastically from the top of an adjacent bookcase, which Frank had long ago degraded into a lumber cupboard.

All at once a door leading from the kitchen opened, and Lyddy appeared dark against the light like a figure in one of De Hooge's pictures.

"That servant of Miss Ponsonby's," said the good old creature, "has just been here for some medicine. Missus not so well last night and this morning. The woman's going on to the bank for some money, and will call as she returns."

"Any news of the thief?"

"No, Mr. Frank; but she said in her way that the Lord had been very good, for nothing more had been lost. I don't know how much the woman would lose. I know I wouldn't trust her with twopence myself. Here's a book, sir, she brought for you."

"All right, Lyddy, I'll see about the medicine, and leave it here directed."

Tresham was puzzled and vexed at the news of Miss Ponsonby's being worse. "She fidgets herself ill," he thought. "I must reduce the sedatives, perhaps they hurt her; and yet I gave very little." Then he opened the parcel reverentially. It was Aurora Leigh, which he had asked Lilly to lend him. He opened it and read the name of the owner written in the prettiest hand, and in violet-coloured ink. He kissed the name, which was foolish. As he did so, the door leading from the street opened quietly, and without any preliminary knock. It was a dull heavy morning, and Tresham could not see for a moment, in the darkness of that corner, who his visitor was. The next instant there emerged into the light the hard imperturbable face of Superintendent Humphries, who, walking up straight to the counter, and, placing his two hands on the edge of the great mortar, as if it were the edge of a dock, nodded grimly to the young doctor. He looked all round the surgery before he spoke, as if that was a precaution without which he never opened his mouth.

"Morning, sir," he said, as if afraid of committing himself.

"How d'ye do, Humphries? Anything more new about that ten pounds?"

"Just a little, sir; but better kept dark for the present. What I've come about touches the same concern, but indirectly. Thought it right to let you know; it might help us somehow."

"Are you after any one?"

"Well, not exactly; but don't you go and ask me questions that I can't very well answer. It stands in this way. You must know that I sometimes employ loafers and fellows that hang about the public-houses here, and no one takes notice of, to give me information. They're often better than our professional hands, I find. Well, one of these fellows came to me late last night, and told me he had seen that old servant of Miss Ponsonby's go into Derwent's and buy something. It mayn't mean anything, but we're always suspicious in a house where there has been a robbery. She was muffled up, the man told me, and that he shouldn't have known her if he hadn't followed her from Miss Ponsonby's. And what do you think she bought at Derwent's, as I've just ascertained?"

"Can't tell."

"Chlorodyne."

"Chlorodyne? Well? Perhaps she takes it, and doesn't want it known."

"Possibly. Yes; but the day after the robbery she bought another bottle at Jackson's."

"Perhaps the old lady and she both take it."

"Then I should know that, because it

would be easier then to have robbed her. That's all I have to say. I leave you to work out the idea. Morning, sir. She didn't take the money herself, but she knows who did, or I'm very much mistaken."

"These policemen," thought Tresham, "fancy everything suspicious, but I can't, for my life, see what an old maid-servant buying chlorodyne has to do with the affair."

About four o'clock of that same day, Superintendent Humphries cautiously lifted the latch of Miss Ponsonby's front gate, and entered with a suspicious and inquiring air. He lifted it as lightly as a gamekeeper lifts a spring-gun, and shut it as carefully as a gamekeeper lays down an open rat-trap. He was a burly man, and not adapted, even if shod with felt, for very velvet-footed ambuscades; but still it was astonishing, from habitual and long-studied precaution, how quietly he passed over the lozenge-shaped stones of the centre walk and up the cracked steps between the two old bay-trees, that seemed to draw back and tremulously contract themselves at his ominous approach. The spinster elms, too, tossed their heads as if signalling some coming danger to their humbler kinsfolk down below. All these trees and bushes, and the Job's-tears, too, and even the passion-flower on the wall of the house, with its unsuccessful little pumpkins, the superintendent eyed with suspicion and distrust, not unmingled with triumph. He seemed, as he looked up at the windows, to regard the house abstractedly as a large rat-trap, enclosing some victim on whom his relentless hand was about to close. Was the victim conscious of his approach? His grim wooden mouth was keeping the secret safe in prison. His eyes seemed to dim and darken, as if their owner turned back their light after the manner of dark lanterns, or as if they had been gas-burners turned down to the lowest and most economical minimum. The dull grey day suited such a visitor, who seemed to take a gloomy pleasure in his dismal employment. Outside that heavy black panelled entrance he stood like Care at Death's door, as he pulled down his frock-coat, buttoned his left glove, then knocked firmly and clearly, but not loud. That man would have tried to fire off a cannon quietly.

Mercy opened the door, but looked almost as if she had expected somebody else, and was disappointed. The fact was, Miss Ponsonby had been expecting her landlord, an upholsterer in the town, whom she had sent for to call and receive his rent. This was a ceremony of great solemnity, and not to be lightly performed. Lilly had obtained a short furlough till the ceremony had taken place. The preparatory business had so roused the old lady, and the matter of the robbery was so much on her mind, that she made no objection to instantly seeing Superintendent Humphries in her sanctum up-stairs, in which a fire had been recently lit preparatory to an audience with the deferential landlord.

The wood was still spitting and crackling as the superintendent entered the room, hat in hand, and eyed with a suspicious glance the black profiles over the mantelpiece, a harvest scene by Westall over the bureau, and two engravings of King George and Queen Charlotte the year of their marriage, that were hung on the wall that divided the room from that in which Miss Ponsonby slept. The bureau, as having been the receptacle of the lost ten-pound note, however, attracted his chief attention, and he looked at it close to see if it had a common or a patent lock. Then he thought if King George could only have spoken, how useful he would have been in the witness-box; and he got up and smelt at a scent-bottle on the mantelpiece to find out if it contained laudanum. Next he went to the windows to look out and see how far they were from the ground, and if there were a balcony or leads near, or any vine or ivy that could assist an adventurous thief. And at every look he nodded his head as if in answer to some preconceived opinion. Then he looked out again, and shook his head. He had just resumed his seat on the extreme edge of a chair near the door when Miss Ponsonby entered from her bedroom. She was very weak and exhausted, and coughed feebly as she took her seat by the fire and begged him also to be seated.

The superintendent did as she requested, and at the same time put his iron-bound hat under his chair as gently as if it contained explosive materials, and not merely that large red cotton handkerchief, the end of which hung over its brim. The old lady's sharp features contracted still more as she looked at him piercingly; then, after a moment's pause, she said:

"You have heard something about my ten pounds?"

The superintendent spoke in a low voice, and drew a line on the old, faded carpet with his stick. "I don't say that, ma'am;

but this I may say" (here he rose, shifted with great quickness and quietude to the door, opened it, looked out, and closed it again softly), "excuse me, ma'am, but in our profession we are obliged to be cautious."

"Don't beat about the bush, man. Say what you have got to say. Who stole my ten-pound note?"

But there was no hurrying or irritating Humphries. He resumed his track like an old Indian on the war trail. "It's not for me to say, ma'am. Time must show that. What I have to do now is to collect information sufficient to discover the guilty party. Felony is a serious matter, and we must make no mistake."

"So I see you mean to refuse to tell me anything, Mr. Humphries. Very well, I suppose you know your business. I can't compel you, but what I want to know of you and your men is, who stole my ten pounds."

"That's faster than we can go, ma'am; but something we can tell you which will astonish you. These things are very disagreeable to ladies and gents, but there comes a time when they must be told out. Some one from this house—I don't name names—has written two or three letters to a party of no great account at Gypsum: we've traced so far."

"Well, sir, I know no one here who corresponds with any person at Gypsum; still I cannot control my servants, nor do I know where all their friends reside."

"Writing letters, ma'am, is no great harm. I don't want to make it so; but when you get one of those letters in your hands—I am not going to say how—and find out that it has half a bank-note in it—I don't say it was your note, but it might be——"

Miss Ponsonby, startled at this surprising intelligence, leaned forward with the keenest interest. She was about to violently pull the bell for Mercy, when the superintendent stopped her.

"We must move very quietly in this affair. There must be no alarm given, or we shall lose our bird, and spoil all. You leave it to me, ma'am, and I'll bring it out right."

"But I must—I will—I'll not have thieves——"

Miss Ponsonby hardly knew what to say or do. A vague terror and distrust surrounded her, yet she still felt a certain reliance in this man, who seemed to see clearly through the darkness.

"You have lost nothing since that first note?" said the superintendent, making an entry in a small note-book.

"Nothing. I have five ten-pound notes now lying here on my desk that Mercy, my maid, brought me this morning from the bank. I left them in here with that door open that you see there between this room and my bedroom. No one could enter here without my hearing them. The notes are here untouched."

"You counted them when they arrived? I suppose you can trust your servant?"

"Perfectly. I have always found her entirely trustworthy. I would trust her with money untold. I not only counted the notes when they arrived, but I took their numbers."

"I'll take down the numbers, too, please," said the superintendent.

Miss Ponsonby read the numbers from a memorandum.

"But I'll just compare them," she said, "with the notes, to be sure they are right."

The superintendent took the memorandum and the old lady read the numbers—2465, 9743, 32——

Suddenly, as she took up the last note, she gave an hysterical scream, and dropped almost fainting into her chair. The fifth note was gone!

The superintendent snatched up the notes and counted them three times over, minutely examining each.

"No," he said, at last, "there are only four. This begins to look very ugly."

"Oh, save me from these thieves," she cried, "or I shall go mad. I'm surrounded by thieves. I'm betrayed by every one. I can trust no one. I must carry my money sewn in my gown, and even then, perhaps, they will murder me for it. What shall I do? What shall I do?" And the old lady sank in her chair, and rocked herself to and fro in the utter wretchedness of the moment. "What shall I do? What shall I do?" she kept murmuring, looking with blank eyes at the portrait of Queen Charlotte.

"I just want to see one thing," said the superintendent, going to the door, and examining the lock contemptuously. "Perhaps you are not aware that with a pair of pliers, or a small pair of pinchers, thieves can always open a locked door if the key is left in the inside. Be kind enough to lock me out, and you will see."

Miss Ponsonby mustered strength enough to obey the superintendent's instructions. But the lock was rusty, and the key did

not yield to the pliers. Humphries tapped quietly, confessed his defeat, and was re-admitted. He did not say much about his failure, merely, "No, it was not done that way."

"If you'll take my advice, ma'am," he said, as he prepared to go, "you'll keep this very quiet. Mention it to no one, and we shall soon get our hands on the right person. There's one thing there is no harm in telling you before leaving, and that is, that it's either one of two persons; but it is not for me yet to be certain which. Good-night, ma'am, and pray keep very quiet, or we shall do no good. Tell them you don't feel very well, and I'd advise you to lock up the other notes. Good-night, ma'am. I can let myself out, thank you. I shall have to be here once or twice more, I dare say, and it is as well to learn the stairs. Mind what I tell you now. *It's either the young lady or the maid.*"

CHAPTER VIII. BY THE FIRELIGHT.

George had not an acute mind, nor had even Big Bookham furnished him with a very vast fund of experience; yet he had already begun to know when his master was going to call at Miss Ponsonby's, for he was always more particular about how Beauty was groomed, and how the harness looked, on those mornings. About master's own dress, too, there was a change perceptible even to George, who had courted in his time, and indeed had been engaged to a very respectable young woman, laundrymaid at Big Bookham, to use his own words, "six years come next Crampton fair." When, therefore, Beauty pulled up at Miss Ponsonby's gate a little before sunset on the day in question, George smiled grimly to himself as Mr. Tresham ordered him to drive home, and to mind that certain specified medicines were taken out in good time.

The young doctor looked very manly and stalwart as he stood at Beauty's head, fondling her as he gave George the orders. The clear blood that flowed in his veins and brightened his cheek, was freshened by the drive, and his eyes, clear as onyxes, were radiant with health. His broad chest, his shapely, active limbs, betokened strength that was redundant, yet without clumsiness, and he moved with the firm, brisk step of a man whose self-respect no adversity could daunt, and whose honest pride would not bend to mere wealth, even though it sat on a throne. As he ran up the old steps between the bay-trees, that already seemed to him like friends, the spinster trees began to nod and gossip faster than ever, as at that moment Lilly, who was picking some passion-flowers from the plant that grew over the house, turned and saw the not unwelcome visitor. They met and shook hands, and his hand did not pass from hers so instantaneously perhaps as it might have done.

They walked together half-way up the garden path, hardly speaking. Then Lilly stopped at an aucuba, and smoothed one of the mottled leaves.

"This always seems to me so un-English a plant," she said. "It is very silly of me, I know, but somehow it always makes me think of mottled soap."

Tresham laughed as he smoothed the same leaf which Lilly had touched. "Woman's instinct is truer than wisdom," he said; "it is un-English, it is a distinguished foreigner—it comes from Japan. I can fancy odd people in coloured silks sitting beside it."

"And aren't these funny, too?" said Lilly, stopping and laughing at a bush of Job's-tears. "How pretty the little balls of snow are stuck all over. But what I love most is the Guelder-rose. Oh, isn't that charming?"

"May I tell you," said Tresham, stopping, and taking her hand unchidden, "what flower you always remind me of?"

"Yes, do, But don't say a sunflower or a tulip, because I can't bear them."

"No. You are like a white moss-rose-bud, half open, on a June morning." He said this in a very soft, low voice. "As pure as beautiful, and as beautiful as pure."

"I'd rather be like a snow-drop. Only I'm too happy for a snow-drop. A snow-drop bends its head, and is always thinking of the dark cold ground from which it has escaped. But, look! Oh, what a beautiful, beautiful sunset!"

Frank turned to see. It was indeed beautiful. From the high ground of the upper garden they looked down on a valley flooded with a golden haze, in which a gable-ended house, about a mile off, floated like a Noah's Ark. Somehow or other no sunset had ever seemed so beautiful to Tresham before; but perhaps the slender figure by his side gave some value to the landscape. Then they walked together to the house. As Lilly opened the front door Mercy met them.

"If you please, Mr. Tresham," she said, "missus is very much engaged with a gentleman on business, and would be much

obliged if you would walk into the parlour for a few minutes."

"It's Mr. Blake, the landlord, I suppose, Mercy?" said Lilly. Mercy made no audible reply, but shut the door.

"How mysterious Mercy is," said Lilly. "Poor Mr. Blake is a little fat good-natured man; certainly by no means calculated to inspire awe."

Mercy did not bring the candles, and they sat by the firelight, in just such a flickering glow as that through which Tresham had first snatched his surreptitious glance at Lilly. Dandy, after walking round himself three times, as if he were winding himself up, lay down and pretended to doze.

"It is very foolish, I know," said Tresham, "but from some early association of ideas, derived from a wood drawing in an old Dutch Bible, I can never see a garden but I think of paradise. The Dutch artist, I remember, had divided Eden into little square borders, and there was a canal running through the middle of it."

Lilly laughed in her joyous, natural way.

"Adam was very fat and squab, and wore a burgomaster's dress, but what was most lamentable, the artist had left out Eve."

Lilly looked grave. She had an instinct of some revelation that she dreaded, yet longed for. She felt her cheek burn, she knew his eyes were fixed on her.

"It was just this time, and by just this sort of light," said Frank, reflectively, at the same time moving his chair nearer than was strictly necessary to Lilly's, "that I first saw you." As if unconsciously his hand had clasped Lilly's. She did not resist the annexation.

"Yes, I look best," said Lilly, in a low, soft voice, "when you can't see me clearly."

"No, you look best in the sunshine, which seems your proper element. Shall I tell you what I stole that day?"

"Stole? Oh, you didn't steal! What?"

"Well, not Miss Ponsonby's ten-pound note. Only some violets I found on the carpet."

Lilly made no reply, but looked again at the fire. She dared not glance at Tresham, nor did she draw away her hand. She could not, indeed, he held it so fast. Another moment, though she saw no movement, and his strong arm was round her, his lips were pressed to hers.

"Lilly, I can't keep it in my heart any longer," he said. "I love you more than all the world. Ever since I saw you that evening my life seems to have moved in a world of glory and delight. Lilly, you do love me?"

The answer Lilly gave was an eloquent one, though she uttered no word. Her lips seemed to nestle on Frank's, and at the same moment a drop of warm rain as from some unseen cloud fell on his cheek.

"Why, darling," he said, with the tenderness of a woman, yet with all the proud strength of his own brave, frank manner—"why, my own darling, you're crying."

"It is for joy, then," Lilly said, passing her hand fondly through Frank's wavy brown hair.

"You don't love me?" he said, kissing her brow and eyes.

"Yes, Frank, I do," murmured Lilly, and pressed her cheek against his with all the tender confidence of innocence and love.

The tramp of heavy feet descending the stairs roused them from their delicious dream. The heavy feet passed the parlour, and lingered a moment at the front door, which slammed in a quick sort of way after the mysterious person. Tresham rose, and looked out, but it had grown almost too dark now to distinguish the figure of the visitor.

"I don't think it is Mr. Blake, Lilly," he said; "it is a taller man."

They little knew what evil the visit of that dim figure receding into the darkness portended.

A minute or two afterwards the door opened, and Mercy presented herself. She spoke in her usual suffering voice, and with an odious twang peculiar to herself.

"Missus, Miss Lilly," she said, "will be glad to see you for a minute or two before Mr. Tresham comes up. Missus has got some letter, miss, I think, to show you; blessed tidings, as I believe."

Mercy's malign eyes had already gained some inkling that Frank and Lilly were lovers, and she rejoiced at it, because the hope of soon blasting Lilly's happiness had long lurked in her heart, and she now tasted the delight of suddenly discovering that if what she had just set afoot worked well, she could at one stroke make two persons miserable instead of one.

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THE ROSE AND THE KEY.

CHAPTER XVI. A SKIRMISH.

PLUMP little Mr. Puntles is a cosey bachelor of two-and-sixty. Something of an antiquary, something of a herald, he is strong in county lore. He is the only man in Roydon who honestly likes books. He lives in the comfortable square brick house of Charles the First's date, at the northern end of the village. He usually takes a nap of five minutes after his dinner, and then is bright for all the evening after.

The Reverend Mr. Foljambe, who considers himself an aristocrat, talks with him upon genealogies, and such matters, with the condescending attention that befits his high descent and connexions.

"No family has a right to powdered-blue in their liveries, except this branch of the Vernons, one branch of the Lindseys, and two other families," said Mr. Puntles, with his eyes closed, and his finger tracing diagrams slowly on the table-cloth. "It is a very distinguished privilege, and I'll tell you how the Vernons came by it."

Mr. Foljambe smiled blandly, and also, nearly closing his eyes, inclined his ear; but a vociferation at another part of the table, where Captain Bamme and the curate were in hot debate, arrested the communication.

"Who consolidated your civil power in India?" urges the curate. "I'll tell you, captain. It was Mr. Richard Colley Wellesley of Dangan, in the county of Meath. The Marquis Wellesley, as you are good enough to call him. And who commanded the Indian army, at the same critical period, when something more was wanted than blundering and plundering, a teaste of genius and a teaste for thundering?"

Before answering his own question the Reverend Mr. Doody applied his glass to his lips, his disengaged hand being extended all the time toward his gallant adversary, with a movement of the fingers, intended to retain the ear of the company and the right of continuing his speech.

"So far as thundering is concerned, Mr. Doody," said the vicar, with stately jocularity, "it seems to me that your countrymen seldom want a Jupiter."

The captain with a rather inflamed visage, for more had passed between the curate and him, smirked angrily, and nodded at the vicar, and leaned back and tossed his head, and rolled a little in his chair, smiling scornfully along the cornice.

But the Reverend Mr. Doody could hear no one but himself, and think of no one but Captain Bamme and the Wellesley family at that moment, and he continued: "Who, I repeat, saved India by his genius for arms, as the other consolidated the same empire by his genius for organisation and rule? Who but that Irishman's Irish brother, Arthur Wellesley, Jooke of Wellington? And I think I remember some trifling services that same county o' Meath man did you on other ground. But I'm speaking of India just now, and I ask again, who saved it, again, when its existence was imperilled by the natives? Who but my countryman, Irish Lord Gough, from Tipperary? It's easy for you, in quiet times, when you're enjoying the fruits of Irish gallantry and Irish genius, to make little of Ireland, but you know where to run for help when you're in danger."

"Haven't you a rather uncomfortable way of putting it, Mr. Doody?" said the Reverend Mr. Foljambe, a little gravely.

"Why I can prove to you," began Mr. Doody, not hearing the vicar, "if you take

up the old chronicles, that the Irish were in the habit of continually invading England."

"With what result?" inquired Mr. Foljambe, with a smile.

"Ship-loads of plundher and slaves," answered Mr. Doody, promptly.

"We had better look sharp," said cosey Mr. Puntles, who rather enjoyed the debate.

"If they had but a regiment of tall Irish clergymen, no doubt they'd march through the country," said the captain, laughing stingingly.

"If they had nothing but a regiment of small English captains before them," said the curate, "they'd do it easy enough. My dear friend," continued the curate, "I don't say, mind, that a mob can fight a trained army; but give us eighteen months to drill in, and see where you'll be; give us what ye must give us, before long, federalism, and before ten years, we'll conquer England!"

Captain Bamme uttered a short laugh of scorn.

"I hope you'll spare my little collection of curiosities," said Mr. Puntles, merrily.

"If you're strong be merciful," broke in Captain Bamme.

"Don't be frightened, captain; we'll spare them, and all other little curiosities, too," said Mr. Doody, hilariously, meaning, of course, the captain. "But, seriously, as sure as you're sitting there, Ireland will conquer England, if she gets a fair chance."

"That will be something new, won't it?" says the Reverend Mr. Foljambe. "Shakespeare says something about a country

> That never yet did lie
> Under the proud foot of a conqueror."

"Shakespeare said more than his prayers, sir; didn't he know as well as we do, that there is no country in christendom that has been so often and so completely conquered as England? 'Did never lie!' ha, ha, ha! 'The proud foot of a conqueror?' Mighty fine! Did ye never lie undher the Romans? or the Saxons? or the Danes? or the Normans? and didn't they, one after the other, stay here and settle here, and take your houses and live in them, and your fields, and make ye dig, and sow, and reap, and stack for them? and didn't they drive you hither and thither, and tax ye, and work ye, and put ye to bed at sunset, and make ye put out your candles and fires by sound of bell? And after all, England did never lie under the proud foot of a conqueror! Sure, my dear sir, ye oughtn't to be talking like a madman. It's enough to make a pig laugh. Can't ye buy books, and read them?"

"But, sir, I'm very proud of those conquests," interposed Mr. Puntles, smiling happily. "All these invaders are blended down into one composite mass, and that fusion is the stuff that makes the modern Englishman."

"It won't do, sir; a few thousands scattered among millions never changed the blood or nature of a nation yet—you're Britons, still. You are Britons, the same as ever; by no means a warlike people, not gifted with any military aptitudes, pacific and thradesman-like, and the natural prey and possession of a nation with the spirit of conquest and a genius for arms. You're sinking into your natural, hereditary state, that of Quakers and weavers, contented with your comforts and your opulence, knuckling down to the strong, and bullying the helpless, and leaving soldiering in earnest to nations that have the heart and the head for that sort of game, and just taking your chance, and hoarding your money."

"Chance has answered pretty well up to this," said Mr. Foljambe; "we have escaped a military occupation tolerably well I hope."

"So has Iceland, sir, so has Greenland; ye're out of the gangway, don't ye see, sir? I could show you in the middle ages——"

"Don't mind the middle ages," said the captain, "pray don't—we won't undertake to follow you there."

"*You* won't follow me, captain, because ye're gone before me there, my dear fellow, ha, ha, ha!—ye're one of the middle ages of this place yourself, my dear captain; but never mind, age is honourable, and middle age is middling honourable, anyhow."

The captain stared hard at the decanter from which he filled his glass. He so obviously meditated a retort that the neutral powers interposed.

"Now, now, now—pray Captain Bamme take some wine, and send the decanters this way," said the vicar, who was in charge of the party; "and Mr. Doody, I think we have stood the Irish invasion very well, and I vote we declare an armistice and a—eh—what do you think?"

"We'll be better friends, captain, you and I," said Mr. Doody, generously, "when we come to understand one another; but don't ye be talking about things you don't understand. Stick to the cane and the pipeclay, my boy; and my blessing attend ye! and I pledge ye in a glass of clar't. Gentle-

men, I give ye our gallant friend, Captain—— I give ye my word, I never heard your neeme. No matter; our gallant friend the captain; but I fill to ye all the same."

"I think he's gone," observed Doctor Malkin, rousing himself suddenly from a profound "brown study." So he was, although the Reverend Michael Doody who, during his concluding remarks, had been staring at a claret jug, in the direction of which his powerful arm was extended, while he twiddled his fingers toward the handle, in general invitation to the company to push it within reach of his generous clutch, had not perceived his disdainful retreat.

"So he is! There now! Ye see what it is to be thin-skinned," said the curate, filling his glass and drinking it off, without insisting on the presence of the object of the compliment, or the participation of the rest of the company.

"That's good clar't. I'll trouble ye, sir, for the white wine—the madeira—thank ye, and I drink to our departed friend, the captain, and, in solemn silence to the memory of his temper, the ci aiture!" Which ceremony, like the last, he had all to himself, and performed with a loud smack of his lips.

The Reverend Mr. Foljambe and Mr. Puntles had dropped into their quiet feudal talk again. Doctor Malkin would take no more wine, and the tall and courtly vicar, having collected the general suffrage in favour of joining the ladies, arose, and the little party retreated, talking listlessly, in the direction of the drawing-room.

CHAPTER XVII. IN THE DRAWING-ROOM.

The drawing-room is now in a blaze of wax-lights, and every object in it brilliantly defined. Miss Maximilla Medwyn has arrived, and stands near the fire-place, in a dark silk dress, with a good deal of handsome lace; otherwise the same erect figure, and energetic and pleasant face, that we have seen.

Two gentlemen have arrived to tea—a tall man, quiet and gentleman-like, of fifty years or upwards, who is talking to Lady Vernon, and a very short, vulgar man, fat and sleek-haired, with smooth chin and cheek, and ill-made, black, baggy clothes, and a general greasiness of hair, face, and habiliments. This is Mr. Zachary Smelt, a light in the firmament of Roydon dissent, who does not disdain to revolve, on occasions, round the munificent centre of so many religious charities, enterprises, and cliques.

Mr. Smelt has taught the muscles of his fat face to smile, with a perseverance that must have been immensely fatiguing when he first tried it; but every fold and pucker in his cheeks was, by this time, as fixed as those of the great window curtains opposite to him were by the tacks and hammer of the upholsterer. I am sure he sleeps in that smile, and that he will die with it on. When he is angry it still sits on his putty face, though his little black eyes look never so fell and wicked over it, and though it has become a grimace by no means pleasant.

"I'm less in the world, Mr. Smelt, than you are," Miss Maximilla is saying tartly enough to this good man, whom, instinctively, she loves not. "What do you mean by telling me I live too much in and for the world? You don't say that to Lady Vernon, I venture to say. You like her money too well to risk it. I venture to say you have fifty times as many spites, and a hundred times as many schemes, in your head as I. I have just as good a commission to speak plainly as you have. There's your great gun, the Honourable Bagge Muggridge, as you take care to advertise him whenever he attends a meeting, or makes a speech. He has gone out of the world, as you term it; that is, he shirks his duties as a public man and a country gentleman, surrounds himself with parasites and flatterers, and indulges his taste for notoriety by making dull speeches at canting meetings, and putting himself down for shabby contributions to all sorts of useless things. And this selfish creature, because he gratifies his indolence and his vanity, and rides his hobby, has, you tell us, retired from the world, and become an apostle, and is perfectly certain of an eternal crown of glory. Those were your words, and I have seldom read anything more shocking."

Perhaps Miss Medwyn had something more to say, and no doubt Mr. Z. Smelt had somewhat to rejoin, but the Reverend Mr. Foljambe walked slowly up with a gracious smile, his head inclined and his hand extended, and said, with dignified affection:

"And how is my very dear friend, Miss Medwyn?"

The vicar chose not to see Mr. Smelt, though the shoulder of his fashionably cut clerical coat almost touched the forehead of that fat thunderer against episcopacy, whose fixed smile acquired under this affront a character as nearly that of a sneer as anything so celestial could wear. So

Zachary Smelt, folding his fat hands, turned on his heel with an expression of malignant compassion, and Mr. Foljambe inclined his long face and high nose over Maximilla Medwyn, smiling, in his way, as sweetly as his fellow-labourer, and as his "very dear friend" answered his affectionate inquiries, his shrewd eye was peering after Lady Vernon, and I am afraid he could not have given a very accurate account of what the good old spinster answered.

A cloud crossed the pure light of his brow as he saw the fat dissenter, who was always extracting money for the behoof of his sect from Lady Vernon, place himself before her exactly as the tall grave man with the iron-grey head was withdrawing.

Mr. Foljambe turned out of his way, and looked into a book of prints which Doctor Malkin was turning over.

"An unexpected pleasure that," murmured the doctor, with smiling irony, as he glanced toward the short fat figure of Mr. Smelt.

"Oh! That is——?" hesitated the vicar, compressing his eyelids a little as he glanced towards Mr. Smelt, whom he knew as well as the doctor did. "I stupidly forgot my glasses."

"Mr. Zachary Smelt, the Independent preacher. I venture to say there is not a drawing-room in the country, except this, into which that fellow would be admitted," said the doctor, who had no practice among that sect.

"Well, you know, Lady Vernon may do things that other people couldn't. Smelt? Yes, he is a troublesome person, and certainly, I don't pretend to say—I don't stand, at all, I hope, on that sort of thing; but I should not suppose he can feel quite at home among gentlemen."

Doctor Malkin smiled and shrugged his shoulders.

"This is, you know, a very distinguished house," continues the vicar, loftily, "and not the place, as you say, where one would expect to meet people of a certain level in society; I don't object to it, though, of course, there are others who, I dare say, don't like it. But I do say it is a mistake, as respects the object of the distinction; it does not answer its purpose. I venture to say there is not a more uncomfortable man in this county to-night, than this Mr.—Mr.—a—Smelt."

"I'm not so sure; he is such an impudent fellow," said the doctor.

"I shouldn't wonder if he had a good deal of that kind of thing, as you say. You possibly have more opportunities than I can boast. You see, Doctor—a—Doctor—a—a—Malkin." The Reverend Mr. Foljambe had a habit of hesitating rather over the names of small men with whom he was good enough to converse. "Lady Vernon, though she is a church-woman, and a very staunch one, in a certain sense, has yet very vague views respecting the special sympathy due to those who, in a more intimate way, are of the household of faith; but she'll come all right, ultimately, with her powerful mind, and the supremacy she assigns to conscience in everything. I have had, from my position, opportunities, and I can safely say I have rarely encountered a mind so entirely under the guidance and control of conscience."

The Reverend Richard Howard Foljambe looked with the affectionate interest of a good pastor and kinsman at that paragon of women.

"What a splendidly handsome woman she is!" observed the doctor. "By Jove, for her time of life, she's perfectly wonderful."

Every one flatters Lady Vernon, and these gentlemen like to pay her compliments in each other's ears, though she does not hear them. This frank testimony behind backs prevents the least suspicion of adulation in what they may say in her hearing. But in truth, Doctor Malkin's criticism is no flattery, though, perhaps, they hardly know that it is not, their critical faculties being a little confused, standing so much as they do in the relation of courtiers to her.

They are both covertly looking at her. They see a lady of some four or five-and-forty, still very handsome, according to the excellence of middle-aged beauty. How refined and elegant she looks, as she talks gravely with that little vulgar dissenter. She is the representative of an ancient family. She is peculiar in appearance, in habits, in character. A fine figure, a little fuller than girlhood, but only a little. A Greek face, pale, proud, and very still.

"What a talent for command that woman has!" says the doctor.

"She's very clever—she's very able, I may say, is Lady Vernon," says the clergyman, who being a kinsman, does not quite like Doctor Malkin's calling her a woman.

"Did it ever strike you, sir, making allowance for the difference of sex, that her eye has a very powerful resemblance to that

of a remarkable historic genius?" asks Doctor Malkin.

"Ah—well, I can't quite say; a—do you mean—I don't quite see," says the vicar.

"A large wonderful grey eye that will be famous as long as history lasts—I mean Napoleon the first consul, Napoleon the Great. It is powerfully like some of the portraits."

"Well, do you know, I should not wonder. I believe there is—very likely," replies the vicar.

"Now, Miss Maud's, you see, although they are large and grey, they haven't got that peculiar character—a look of serene command, and what some people would call cold; it is very fine."

"Yes, and accompanied with that talent, she has so much administrative ability! She is a Dorcas, but a Dorcas on a very princely scale indeed," says Mr. Foljambe.

"More like my idea of Minerva-glaucopis, you know—just that marble brow and pencilled eyebrow, and cold, full, splendid grey eye. It is a study for Pallas; it would be worth a fortune to some of our artists," says the doctor.

The doctor's face looks a little sterner as he closes his little speech. It is not always easy to say what a man is looking at with an obliquity of vision like his; but I think of his two rather fine dark eyes, that one which he chiefly uses glanced at that moment on Miss Maud Vernon. Perhaps some association or train of thought, suddenly suggested, caused the change. The doctor's face is well enough when he is talking and animated. In repose it is not prepossessing; disturbed by any unpleasant emotion it is still less so.

LYCEUMS AND LECTURING IN AMERICA.

The custom of organising lyceums, and of employing lecturers, has long been in vogue in some parts of the United States. But, in recent years, the occasional custom has grown into a universal national "institution." Formerly, only towns and villages of exceptional enterprise and literary taste could support a series of lectures for the winter evenings. Now it would be difficult to find a community, counted by thousands, without its established system of lecturing. Lyceums there used to be, in the country towns, wherein local magnates at intervals entertained their neighbours with political disquisitions and agricultural dissertations; where the college heroes of the locality puzzled their audiences with difficult Latinised sentences on subjects of mysterious import; where great oracles of philosophy or sociology, famous apostles of temperance, or stirring revivalists in religion, now and then appeared; and where the more serious entertainments were varied by concerts in which the village soprani astonished their best friends by producing an act from a real opera, and the village basses rolled out sonorously the Sexton, and Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep.

But, in those days, there was little system about the lyceums and the lecturing. The lyceums were, for the most part, in the country at least, held in the town-hall, where the electors were wont to meet and choose their "select men" and "school committee," and where such exhibitions as the folk were privileged to witness took place. The hall was hired by the lecturer, a doorkeeper paid to receive the admission fees, a bill-poster set to advertise the entertainment on the fences and dead walls, and on the appointed evening the lecturer made his appearance, said his say, and retired. Then, in the cities, as lecturing grew more into favour, organisations were effected, and committees formed for selecting the lecturers, hiring the hall, and making the general arrangements. These organisations were (and are still) of great use, in making lecturing an entertaining and useful system for the benefit of the people. They at once produced a standard of excellence in lecturing, brought about a beneficial competition among the lecturers, and were able to attract and hold the general attention of the public to this method of passing the evenings. Twenty years ago, the professional lecturers in America were few in number, and comprised only men well known to be endowed with gifts peculiarly adapted to the platform. They comprised eloquent advocates of particular causes—as John B. Gough, the total abstinence champion; Wendell Phillips, Garrison, and Frederick Douglass, the abolitionists; eminent pulpit orators, such as Henry Ward Beecher and Edwin H. Chapin; scientific lecturers, such as Agassiz; men of forensic fame, such as Edward Everett and George W. Curtis. There was but a poor chance for ambitious young men of little fame to enter lists for the most part narrowed to such names; and to the great men only was lecturing a profitable vocation. Very few of the lecturers of that time devoted themselves to amusing the public; the

lectures were fine displays of ability, often of genius, and were intended to teach and to guide. Everybody was not interested in or attracted by them; it takes long for even enthusiastic reformers to arouse a kindred spirit in the multitude; and a keen taste for eloquence as an æsthetic art is perhaps a gift inferior only to the art itself. So, though the lecturers in the days before the civil war were doubtless popular and successful, they were few in number, and came only now and then.

But of late, for whatever reason, the lyceums in America have become well nigh as numerous, and quite as indispensable, as the pulpits and the theatres. To thousands they are to-day a substitute for the drama, and they are to be found in hundreds of places where theatres are impossible. They afford a means of entertainment to that large class which still clings to the Puritan notion that theatres are either immoral and temptations of the Evil One, or at least have a bad influence upon their frequenters. For of that leaven not a little yet exists in New England. In towns and villages where, during the long and cheerless winter evenings, there was but seldom external distraction or pastime other than the tavern, or the occasional political meeting, there are now weekly lectures, attended by old and young.

The lecture system is more popular and universal in New England than in the West. Boston and its vicinity sends out a larger number of popular speakers throughout the country than any other city. Wendell Phillips and Ralph Waldo Emerson, Oliver Wendell Holmes, John Weiss, Charles Sumner, Henry Wilson, Mrs. Howe, Miss Field, are but a few of the celebrated lecturers contributed by Boston to the platforms of the country. In New England, every village has its regular winter course of lectures. In the city there are a dozen rival courses, sharply competing with each other for the best thought and best oratory in the land; and no evening in the week, during the winter season, passes without the delivery of four or five lectures. Even Sunday is invaded, and on one Sunday evening lately two lecturers delivered addresses on entertaining secular subjects at two of the Boston theatres.

Lecturing has been called "lay preaching," and the lectures "lay sermons." And, in many cases, the American lecturer is a very high-priest of science and letters. These lecturers popularise science; Agassiz, in his own winning way, imparts great elementary truths to the thousands who crowd to hear him. They create a genuine taste for literature, and the arts, and history: they lead men (and women) to think on great moral, social, political problems. The lecture system has become, as one of the most eloquent of American lecturers has said, "one of the chief means of touching the springs of public opinion in this country. That, indeed, is its great power." It is quite true that the lecturer finds himself forced, in one way or another, to be entertaining. It is equally true that he must be something more. Neither Dryasdusts nor buffoons, pure and simple, are tolerated. Their entertaining quality must be either due to great charm of oratory, great pith of subject pithily illustrated, original humour, or "a laugh loaded with a purpose." A man who merely tries to make people grin is out of place Per contra, a man who has an immensity of dry learning in his discourse, and nothing else, will soon find it necessary to abandon the platform and return to his books. The lecturer I have already quoted relates, that when about to speak in a university town, a veteran retired lecturer called him to him and said: "I can't hear you, Mr. C. But I have seen a good deal of service on the platform, and I want to give you, in one sentence, the result of my experience. If you wish to succeed as a public lecturer, make the audience laugh. Believe me, it does not wish to be instructed, or benefited, or preached to. It is composed of men and women tired of their day's work, and of boys and their sweethearts. Make 'em laugh, Mr. C., make 'em laugh, and you'll be right." But the lecturer did not take the advice, and found out, after all, that the audience would take a serious lecture on an interesting subject, well delivered. Still, he agreed that "the lecturer is an orator; the orator is an artist, and the artist must please; and so the lecture is none the worse when it makes us laugh."

The lecture system began with the preaching of great social reforms, and the range of topics selected was, comparatively, limited. Now the subjects upon which the lecturer speaks comprise the widest variety, and take the freest range. During one week of the present season the citizens of Boston were invited to hear discourses on the following subjects: American Literature, Eloquence and Orators, Robert Burns, The Coming Empire, A Chat on Irish Bulls, Peasant Life in Ireland, Kindergarten Schools, Girls, The Man of Sin, The War, Charles Dickens, and The Adirondacks. Ge-

neral Butler took the opportunity of an engagement to lecture, to announce his views on the Alabama Claims. General Banks embraced a similar occasion to speak on the Franco-German War. The present secretary of the Treasury, wishing to explain his financial views more informally than was possible in an official report, delivered them in the form of a lecture to an audience in Philadelphia. No stirring event, affecting the well-being of men, or the condition of nations, passes, without being illustrated to the American public by means of lectures. No small share in bringing the Americans to the point of resisting the spread of slavery at all hazards, is due to the anti-slavery lecturers. Time was, when Wendell Phillips and William Lloyd Garrison lectured in Puritan Boston under the guard of a force of police. They were at last heard and welcomed everywhere as the apostles of abolition. Authors and poets alike are indebted to lecturers for a wider fame, and a much increased sale of their works.

The lyceum became gradually an open platform. The committees of the organisation at first declined, then hesitated, to permit the lecturers to speak upon "irritating" political issues—the most irritating at that time being, of course, slavery. Where this was the case, the lyceum-goers were forced to be content with the respectable Mr. Splurger's periods about "great domain," or the Reverend Joshua Walker's fervid description of Jerusalem and the Holy Places, or Dr. Smoothbore on the happiness derived from doing right, and the felicities of home life, or Mr. Frantic's awful pictures of the results of wine-drinking. But it would not do. The political speakers were too many and too eloquent to be shut out. The lyceums manifestly drooped. People would hear Wendell Phillips on slavery. "Before the war," says a writer, "the most noted and fashionable public room in Philadelphia was the Musical Fund Hall. The chief lecturers had all spoken there. But one day they ascertained that a regulation of the management forbade the entrance of coloured persons. If the owners of a hall chose to exclude any particular class of people, it was their unquestionable right. Nobody denied it; but many of the chief lecturers said, 'We prefer not to speak in that hall while that regulation continues'; and from that day no great and successful course of lectures has been given in that hall." When war came, not only did clergymen preach politics from the pulpit, but dozens of lecturers followed the example set by Phillips, and those few bold spirits who had defied lecture committees, and compelled a hearing on political issues of the gravest import. And from that time may be dated, as I have said, the present unexampled prosperity of the American lecture system. Now the lyceum platform is absolutely free. No subject is tabooed. Mormons have lectured on the holiness of polygamy to "orthodox" audiences, and a famous Oriental atheist has discoursed on the negation of the Scriptures. Wendell Phillips (the greatest of American orators and lecturers) on politics, is succeeded on the same platform by Emerson on philosophy, Cox on wit, and Petroleum J. Nasby on nonsense in general.

The organisation of the lecturing system has been matured, within the past three or four years, by the establishment of bureaux to engage in correspondence with lecturers and lyceum committees, and to make, from a central position, all the arrangements necessary to the numerous courses of lectures throughout the land. There are at present three of these: the first, the American Literary Bureau, is established at New York, under the superintendence of Mr. James K. Medberry, a littérateur of considerable fame; the other two are, the Boston Lyceum Bureau, under Mr. Redpath, and the Western Lecture Association, located at Chicago. The flourishing condition of these bureaux is sufficient to attest the universality of this method of evening entertainment. They are the exchanges and head-quarters of the system, which now requires brokers and regular media of communication. For a fee of one dollar a lecturer may have his name recorded in their books; and in case the bureau effects one or more engagements for him, a certain percentage of the price received for the lecture is deducted for commission. The bureau makes the contracts with the local lecture committees, the money passing through the hands of its agents. Reciprocally, the lecture committees of the various cities and towns allow a certain percentage as commission for securing lecturers to the bureaux. This business is found to be of sufficient magnitude to support the bureaux handsomely. Of course the best known lecturers receive as many engagements as they can fill, and almost at their own prices. Some of them receive a net sum of two hundred dollars, and even sometimes three hundred dollars, per evening, over expenses. Perhaps the average price paid to lecturers of established reputation,

below the first half-dozen, lies between seventy-five dollars and one hundred and twenty-five dollars. Besides these fees, the local lecture committees—at least those in the smaller towns—provide lodgings for the lecturer, or he is invited to partake the hospitality of some "eminent citizen." From the sums I have mentioned, down to the modest remuneration of ten dollars, is the range of emoluments of those who, having "the gift of the gab," are able to use it profitably on lyceum platforms. In the present elaborate organisation of lecturing, it is not wonderful that more and more young men and young women enter this field, which promises prizes so enticing in fame, in gaslight triumphs of applause, in the delightful emotions of oratorical success, and in substantial pecuniary gain. In America a considerable portion of the school-boy's education is devoted to public declamation. He declaims before his mates, first selections, then his own compositions; often, in his teens, he is called upon to speak at exhibitions before fond parents and admiring damsels, or even to mount the rostrum on patriotic anniversaries, and to "spout" at political gatherings. So it is that the taste for oratory is a very general one among the educated youths. Now, also, at the female seminaries and colleges the young ladies are, in many instances, required to declaim and debate—one of the many signs of these woman-suffrage days. To young people thus trained, the prospect of adopting as a distinct and sole profession, that of holding audiences spell-bound, of moving them to laughter or to tears, of swaying public opinion, of teaching masses of men, is most alluring. These fresh recruits who besiege the bureaux at the period when the engagements for the autumn and winter courses take place—that is, in May and June—are, if judged worthy by the bureau managers, set on the first round of the ladder; that is, they are supplied to the village lyceums at ten dollars a head. They usually make their début either at the town-hall or, mayhap, the orthodox or methodist meeting-house of the village; are received, perhaps, with due honour at the parson's or the squire's, and their success or failure duly reported to the central bureau, which takes note of the result for its future guidance.

The literary bureaux which I have described do not confine themselves to providing lyceums with lecturers, and lecturers with platforms. They also act as media, by which those who desire it may enter upon any literary pursuit. They announce that they will provide newspapers with editors, correspondents, and reporters, and those wishing such places with them; colleges with professors and tutors, and professors and tutors with chairs; magazines with writers, and writers with places in magazine or periodical columns. Thus, the whole province of letters seems to have, in a degree, become a matter of brokerage. A young man, or woman, unknown to fame, writes a magazine article, but has no means of bringing it to the notice of a magazine editor. For a small fee the article is taken by the bureau, read and adjudged by its selected critics, and if it prove suitable, by the connexion of the bureau with the publishing houses, a place is found for it somewhere. A country editor, outside the city literary and Bohemian circles, wishes an experienced assistant without delay. He sends to the bureau, stating the salary to be paid, the advantages of Pumpkinville as a residence, the politics of his Banner of Liberty; the bureau, well posted as to the antecedents and capabilities of all applicants for such places on its books, sends the right man to the editor, receiving a modest commission from both parties. Of course, the success of a system such as this depends entirely upon the reputation and known honesty and skill of the bureau managers. If they are in these respects responsible, demand and supply may be mutually suited by their medium.

To return to lecturing. At the present stage of the "woman question," when, in America, two great associations are devoted to the agitation of woman's rights, and we find women sitting in religious and political conventions, becoming postmasters (or mistresses), and brokers, doctors, lawyers, and clergymen (or clergywomen), running for Congress, and even announcing themselves as candidates for the Presidency, it is almost needless to say that the lecture field is thronged with feminine combatants. Years ago no women were heard from the platform, except a few bold, masculine spirits, with lank hair and wearing spectacles, of uncertain age, who no more feared to speak in crowded halls than they did to appear on public thoroughfares in bloomer trousers. A very different state of things exists now. It is quite a mistake to suppose that American female lecturers are now-a-days eccentric ladies of manly temper, endowed with a mission, and scornful of feminine graces and accomplishments. You may now see brisk and airy damsels, not disdaining Grecian bends and chignons,

who hold you rapt for an hour of sprightly elocution, bright sallies of wit, sharp satire, and apt illustration; young women who, albeit public characters, and dealing with public questions, give a quaint colouring to their thought and address by their feminine qualities. There are precocious young women, who talk about the tyranny of man, and argue in favour of more easy divorces; but the most lovely female lecturer of the day, who is also one of the brightest in her mental accomplishments, is now counteracting such influences on the platform by preaching a most eloquent crusade in favour of home virtues, and the sacredness of the marriage tie. That even the "strongest-minded" lady speakers are susceptible to feminine vanities and tastes is proved by an anecdote related of Miss Anna Dickinson. On one occasion she was to speak to a large audience; and was introduced upon the platform by the chairman of the lecture committee. An air was played, previously to the lecture, upon an organ: although a chair stood by the desk, Miss Dickinson remained standing till the music ceased. The chairman asked her afterwards why she did not sit. "What!" she replied. "Did you suppose I was going to sit down in my new silk?" While speaking of Anna Dickinson, let it be said, that there are few American statesmen or lecturers who can speak with such pungency, original thought, learning, irony, apt expression, and stirring eloquence on political subjects, as this little lady, with swarthy face and short curly hair, from the city of the Quakers. Of "magnetic and persuasive women," there are many on the lyceum platform; and their range of subject is as wide as that between philosophy and puns. Not a few combine personal beauty and engaging manners with the art of pleasing by literary grace, and of striking by originality of matter and subject. Among the more noted are Olive Logan, who passed from the stage to the lyceum platform, and whose forte is piquancy and literary gossip; Miss Julia Ward Howe, who speaks always earnestly and well on earnest topics, philosophical or moral; Mrs. Livermore, whose hobby is the right of women to participate in politics; Catherine Beecher, the oldest of the Beechers, and Kate Field, the daughter of an actor. The lecture courses are often varied with readings of the poets; and the Shakespearian readings of Fanny Kemble and Mrs. Scott-Siddons have proved attractive, as a change from the eloquence of the regular lecturers. The lecture platform also has its uses in affording distinguished foreigners opportunities of addressing American audiences; and recently Mr. Thomas Hughes and Mr. Mundella have lectured in the United States, during visiting tours, on the labour question in England.

The American lecturers usually prepare their lectures in the summer vacation, when they are at leisure to resort to rural tranquillity to collect their thoughts, imagine their witticisms, and polish up their rhetorical flights. Many have but one or two lectures for a season; going rapidly through the country, lecturing one night here, and the next night there, repeating the same lecture in the various towns. They arrange their appointments so that there may be a method in their journeyings. And the travelling which some of them are called upon to do, are often no pleasure jaunts. More than one has been summoned from New England to Omaha, the far western limit of settled civilisation, and has journeyed thence viâ Nashville by Atlanta, through the circle of the Gulf States, and so round to Richmond and Buffalo. Stories are told by veteran lecturers, "old stagers," of their trials in "the wilderness," their difficulties in reaching remote western towns where the houses were not yet set in order, and whose inhabitants, nevertheless, thirsted for knowledge and entertainment; of their "bunking" in log-cabins, and living on buffalo steaks and maize; their overturnings on the prairies, and their isolation from post-offices and telegraph-posts. One of the best of American lecturers—George William Curtis—says of this universal lecture system which now so ramifies through every section of the land (and I conclude with his words): "To-day, apparently the simplest, the lyceum is also a most complex institution. It still summons to its platform the latest Gifted Hopkins of the hour. It does not disdain the jester, nor spare the philosopher. Its root is the real charm of oratory, and in the feeling that it is an arena in which important individual opinion may be fearlessly spoken. It entertains, it amuses, it instructs, and it inspires."

A LIFE OF ADVENTURE.

Colonel Corvin, a German gentleman, who has lived a troubled and adventurous life, sits down, towards its close, to relate his adventures. These are so exciting, so characteristic of German manners, and are so naturally told, that the book will find a place upon the shelf beside the pleasant

chronicles which first-class adventurers have unfolded. For an adventurer, in the honest sense, is charming company, whether he has a pen in his hand, or a sword by his side: and Colonel Corvin is a very dashing sort of adventurer.

When a boy he was sent to the Cadet House, the Prussian Military Academy, and was there duly prepared to receive a commission. The photographs he gives of German military life become interesting at this time. But the esprit de corps had no influence over him, for he was at heart a republican; and before the stirring days of 1848, there was no theory of a united Germany and splendid military conquests to reconcile the people to a grinding despotism. When a young man, the colonel had a pastoral love affair with a little tender maiden who gave the officer her whole heart. It is a very pretty little idyll, only for the tragic ending, when the little maid fell into a nervous fever from her passion, sickened, and died of love. The officer was near dying too; but he was in the army, had other things to take his mind off, and soon fell in love again. This new adventure brought him to Paris, where he found the revolution going on: and the account of the organisation of a German invasion of Vaterland by a number of wild democrats who lived there, is most characteristic. A regular legion was formed, and the provisional government gave them money and support. The leaders were Hervegh, the poet, and others, who, after much dreamy discussion of their visionary projects, at last set off on their march from Paris. Crossing the Rhine, the little band commenced a regular campaign. They were joined by some insurgents. There was such confusion in the various towns, and so much disaffection, that they could advance with a great deal of the theatrical effects of campaigning. But at last they came on the Wurtemburgians, with whom they had a gallant little battle, in which they were defeated. At last the Prussians began to appear on the scene. His present majesty had taken the command of his own army: and, near Ludwigshafen, a rather serious engagement took place. Finally the invaders were fairly invested in the fortress of Rastadt, and had to surrender. Colonel Corvin, amid the usual exhibition of divisions, incapacity, and jealousy, had been the moving spirit of the whole defence; and it is quite evident that all his proceedings were marked by good sense and moderation. On the surrender of Rastadt the exciting part of his narrative begins. As he rode out he found the Prussians had come close up, in violation of the terms of the capitulation. He remonstrated.

"Shoot him down!" cried the Prussian soldiers, arrogantly. "What does the fellow say?"

When the garrison came out, the commander offered his sword to Count Groeben, the Prussian general, who contemptuously motioned to the provost to take it. This looked ominous. The surrender was at discretion, but promises had been made of intercession for indulgence and clemency. Some of the rebels, like Corvin, had been in the Prussian service, and these pitiless masters were as reticent as they were likely to be severe.

The instant the capitulation was concluded, the rebel officers were led away, and literally thrust into "the lowest dungeon beneath the castle moat," which was all streaming with water, and crawling with toads. They were fed on bread and water, and it was with difficulty that they got this frightful casemate changed for something better. Then their clothes were taken away; their spurs and epaulettes dragged off. Then commenced slow trials and executions, the trials worse than the executions. The Baden government was determined to carry out measures of the most cruel severity. A court, half military, half civil, began its duties. Nearly every day news came in to the unhappy prisoners that one of their companions had been tried and shot. The first refused to have his eyes bandaged, and said: "I will see my murderers!" Another took his two bottles of wine, and went to the place of execution smoking a cigar. Corvin's wife, a brave woman, had accompanied him, as many other wives had accompanied their husbands, on this expedition. Madame Corvin worked heaven and earth, as the phrase goes, forced her way into the presence of the Princess of Prussia, attacked Count Groeben, and was thrust aside as importunate. Before the surrender she was heroic enough to bid her husband "blow out his brains sooner than surrender to the Prussians." But she rejoiced that her advice had not been followed. When she saw him in his prison, she said, "If you must die, I know you will die like a man." At last his long-deferred trial came round. The Baden government was dealing with him, yet the court was composed of Prussian officers and sergeants. Colonel Corvin made an eloquent speech of two hours in

his own defence, but it was a foregone conclusion. He was found guilty, "by five voices to one, condemned to be shot, and *to pay the costs*." As they drove away past the hotel of the place he heard a cry from a window, and a white hand was waved to him. He was thrust into the condemned cell. It was Saturday; and as no executions were allowed on Sundays, and Monday would be too long a grace, he knew he would be shot that night. About four hours then remained to him. Beside him was a little tumbled litter, from which poor Lieutenant Schad had risen that morning for his sentence. The jailer asked with a sepulchral voice:

"Would he have anything, or see a clergyman?"

The reply was an order for a good dinner, a good bottle of wine, a dozen cigars, and writing-paper. His gallant wife now arrived. She had forced her way into the grand duke's palace, but he would not see her. With an ingenious cruelty, all the princes, before the insurrection was put down, had divested themselves formally of the prerogative of mercy, and relegated it to the hands of the chief soldiers. When she got to the prison, they had the execution dinner served, which was furnished at the expense of the city. She had a little plan for his escape, but he refused to avail himself of it. They were then told that the execution was put off until Monday. So here was a grateful respite. Late at night, however, came the sound of many tramping feet, and two officers called him out to speak to him. She heard their whisperings. It was to tell him that all had been changed, and that he must be ready to be shot at half-past four in the morning.

She heard every word. They were to come for her at three. The agony of the interval may be conceived. The brave woman, however, knew that if she gave way, she would only unnerve him. He held her in his arms all the time: and the only thought that came upon her was, that what she felt so warm and living, would by five o'clock be cold, dead, and inanimate.

At three she was taken away. She knocked at the house of some friendly citizens. "They opened to me. After these good people had lain down again at my request, I stood at the open window alone, despairingly watching the coming morning, and listening to every sound. I felt as cold as stone, but I did not lose consciousness. The clock struck one quarter—half—three quarters—four! He has only one half-hour left to him. Then I heard the report of some shots—the people in the house heard them also—and I fell senseless to the ground, as if they had pierced my heart also." What a terribly dramatic picture!

The prisoner was quite composed, having faced death very often. He made his little preparations. At dawn he heard footsteps, and the mayor and officers entered.

"I am quite prepared, gentlemen," he said.

"No, my friend," said the voice of the counsel who had defended him, "we bring you better news."

The honest lawyer had worked hard through the night; had gone to Carlsruhe and obtained a reprieve. Corvin's sentence was commuted, and he passed six years in penal servitude of the most terrible kind. He was at last released through his health being utterly shattered, and has lived to write these entertaining volumes.

The glimpses of Prussian military life are perhaps the worst portion of his history. No officer was allowed to marry unless he had special permission from the king, and unless he could prove the possession of a certain income. If he married any one in trade of a lower station, he was cut by his brethren, or forced to leave. The Prussian captains would not associate with the subalterns. The discipline was fearful. There were savage colonels and majors who kept drilling their soldiers half the day for their own satisfaction, boxing or pulling the men's ears if they were displeased. Perhaps these old officers now trace all their recent victories to this Spartan discipline.

MARCH.

The March wind whistles through the sombre pines,
Whose sable crests show on the mountain ridge,
Like band of spectres gaunt, and grey, and grim,
Against the cold blue sky: cold, clear, and blue,
Without one fleecy cloud.
From furrows brown
The green blades shoot, that shall hereafter glow,
'Neath August sun-rays, into molten gold,
And fill our garners with the beauteous store
That crowns man's labour, and rewards his toil.
March, with his stern, grand brow, frowning, yet kind,
Front of a Titan; of imperious will,
King March rides blustering o'er dale and mead,
And with his chastening rule, prepares the way
For green-robed April, with her showers soft,
The pure warm sunshine, and her opening buds
Of yellow cowslip bells.
And jocund May,
Crowned with white blossoms, scatters in her track
Hawthorns all odorous, pink apple-blooms,
And all the gorgeous beauty of her dower,

That glads our English homes. So in our life,
Our truest joys must be from trial reaped,
And as March winds foreshadow April sun,
Our dross through furnace passing, comes out—gold.

THE SOLAR FURNACE.

For ages nobody dreamt of doubting that the sun was fire, in the literal and vernacular sense of the word; that is, heat given out by something undergoing consumption by burning. At one time it was a blazing ball "as big as the Peloponessus"—a theory which nearly cost its author his life, in consequence of its excessive boldness. The Athenians did not allow free-thinkers to speculate as they pleased about the sun. Afterwards, the sun was an enormous globe of combustibles — coal, wood, or pitch and tar—on which some vagabond planet had struck a light, and put into a state of conflagration.

In the middle of the last century, wise men held the fiery nature of the sun to be proved by its rays, when collected by concave mirrors or convex lenses, burning, consuming, and melting the most solid bodies, or else converting them into ashes. The sun's rays produce the same effects as might be expected from the most vehement fire. Consequently, the sun is of a fiery substance. Hence it follows that its surface is everywhere fluid, *that* being the condition of flame. As there are no other marks whereby to distinguish fire from other bodies—fire was then a body, an element—but light, heat, a power of burning, consuming, melting, calcining, and vitrifying, there is nothing to hinder us from believing the sun to be a globe of fire, like ours, only invested with flames. In short, set fire to the earth, and you have a minor sun. The sun is only an overgrown bonfire.

The difficulty of this theory is, that if the materials of the sun belonged to our list of known combustibles, they would long since have been exhausted. It is not difficult to calculate how many years a given mass of fuel will keep alight, if placed under similar circumstances to the fires with which we roast and boil.

Sir John Herschel says (in his Familiar Lectures): "The light and heat of the sun cannot possibly arise from the burning of *fuel*, so as to give out what we call flame. If it be the sun's substance that *burns* (I mean consumes), where is the oxygen to come from? and what is to become of the ashes and other products of combustion? Even supposing the oxygen supplied from the material, as in the case of gun-cotton, still the chemical products have to be disposed of. In the case of gun-cotton, it has been calculated that if the sun were made of it so condensed as only to burn on the surface, it would burn out, at the rate of the sun's expenditure of light and heat, in eight thousand years. Anyhow, fire kept up by fuel and air is out of the question. There remain only three possible sources of them, so far as we can perceive—electricity, friction, and vital action."

Please, reader, note this "vital action," because we shall pick it up again by-and-bye.* It is needless to remark that modern chronology will not be satisfied with eight thousand years as the length of the sun's past existence, as a light, from the day on which he first began to shine; and, luckily for us, he does not show the slightest intention of going out. His immense longevity and apparent permanence must therefore be accounted for in some other way than by supposing him to be fire, the result of combustion.

Consequently, to meet this objection, Dr. Mayer started, in 1848, and Mr. Waterston, five years afterwards, independently sketched, what is called the Meteoric Theory of the Sun. The sun's heat and light are thereby derived from a shower of asteroids constantly falling into the sun. The idea has been admirably propounded and made familiar to the British public by Professor Tyndall.† It is calculated that the final maximum velocity of an asteroid, just before striking the sun, would be three hundred and ninety miles a second; the final minimum velocity, two hundred and seventy-six miles a second. The asteroid,

* Is the sun a cluster of glowworms, a shoal of torpedoes, or a swarm of fireflies—behemoths in dimensions and illuminating power? "The bright surface of the sun consists of separate individual objects or *things*, all nearly or exactly of one definite size and shape, which is more like that of a willow-leaf than anything else. These leaves are not arranged in any order, but lie crossing one another in all directions Nothing remains but to consider them as separate and independent flakes or scales having some sort of solidity, These flakes, be they what they may, are evidently *the immediate sources of the solar light and heat*, by whatever processes they may be enabled to elaborate those elements from the bosom of the non-luminous fluid in which they appear to float. Looked at in this point of view, we cannot refuse to regard them as *organisms* of some peculiar and amazing kind; and though it would be too daring to speak of such organisms as *partaking of the nature of life*, yet we do know that vital action is competent to develop both heat, light, and electricity."—Familiar Lectures, by Sir John F. W. Herschel, p. 83.

† See Is Heat Motion? All the Year Round, First Series, vol. xiii., p. 534.

on striking the sun with the former velocity, would develop more than nine thousand times the heat generated by the combustion of an equal asteroid of solid coal; while the shock, in the latter case, would generate heat equal to that of the combustion of upwards of four thousand such asteroids. It matters not, therefore, whether the substances falling into the sun be combustible or not; their being combustible would not add sensibly to the tremendous heat produced by their mechanical collision. In the fall of asteroids Dr. Mayer finds the means of producing the solar light and heat. If the earth struck the sun, it would utterly vanish from perception; but the heat developed by the shock would cover the expenditure of a century.

To this continual bombardment of the sun by showers of aërolites drawn into its mass, it is objected that the meteoric theory continually alters the velocity of planetary motion by the constant increase of the sun's mass, and consequent gravitation; which alteration is contradicted by all the records of solar and planetary constancy. But the meteoric theory of the sun is *one* of Sir John Herschel's possibilities, being based on friction, impact, arrested motion. What should we say to his third possibility, "vital action?" Now Professor Tyndall, without committing himself to the meteoric theory or forcing it on his readers' acceptance, evidently regards it with great favour. He considers that it would be a great mistake to regard it as chimerical, and calls it a noble speculation, adding, "Depend upon it, the true theory, if this, or some form of it, be not the true one, will not appear less wild or less astonishing."

Well; another theory, sufficiently "wild and astonishing," has recently been put forth in a most remarkable and carefully reasoned essay.* What say you, reader, to the idea that the sun maintains his heat by a process analogous to breathing? Not that the sun has lungs like you and I, who include ourselves amongst the higher animals; but that his fiery strength is incessantly renewed during the course of his passage through an atmospheric medium, just as many lower and microscopic animals breathe by the very act of locomotion through the fluid in which they are immersed. Extremes meet; stars and infusorial creatures are similarly fed. The sun is an enormous volvox globator. Nothing is absolutely dead in the universe. Life, when not present, is always "potential."

It is now admitted that all space is filled with the ether. Without it, no satisfactory theory of light is possible; with it, the undulatory theory becomes as lucid as light itself. Mr. Williams holds that all space is also pervaded with an atmosphere, the same in its nature as that which we breathe, but varying in density according to circumstances, excessively rare in the interstellar spaces, and what we know it to be on the surface of the earth. In this hypothesis, remember, there is no more absurdity than in that of the universality of the ether; nay, it has been conjectured that hydrogen gas, the lightest of known bodies, is nothing but a condensation of the earth. From forty-five to fifty miles is usually given as the limit of our atmosphere. Sir John Robison, however, states that the air is sufficiently dense for reflecting a sensible light (and so producing twilight), at a height of nearly two hundred miles. Mr. Williams holds that the terrestrial atmosphere has no actual limit, but that it grows gradually rarer and rarer as it is more and more distant from a centre of attraction. Men before him have maintained that the music of Tubal Cain's organ is still travelling somewhere in far-off strata of attenuated air; and he gives reasons for concluding that the gaseous ocean in which we are immersed is but a portion of the infinite atmosphere that fills the whole solidity of space.

If we believe the confessions of those portions of atmospheric matter, which have been subjected to the torture of experimental rarefaction, to be truthful statements of the general conduct of the great atmosphere, regarded as a whole, the inference is that it must go on expanding and expanding continually, as its distance from the earth increases, and the pressure of the portion above consequently diminishes. Supposing that we still go further upwards, the limit still evades us by continually multiplying expansion, until the gravitation of the earth is neutralised by that of some other orb, towards which our imaginary course is tending. If we cross this neutral line, and continue further in the same direction, we enter the domain of another world, in which as we advance we find the order of density reversed. In short, our atmosphere is but a portion of a universal medium, which is distributed by gravitation, as above indicated, amongst the countless orbs of space.

* The Fuel of the Sun. By W. Mattieu Williams, F.C.S. Simpkin and Marshall, 1870.

Now, with an infinite number of orbs floating amidst the infinity of space, filled with such an elastic medium, every orb will be surrounded on every side by others, and its power of accumulation from the general atmosphere will be controlled and limited by the general resultant of their counteracting gravitating forces. But as we know the relative masses of our own earth and those of the other members of the solar system, and we also know the absolute amount of atmosphere which our earth has appropriated from the general medium, we have the data for calculating, according to the above, the absolute atmospheres of the sun, the moon, and our companion planets and their satellites. Taking the mass and the atmosphere of the earth as his units, Mr. Williams gets a simple rule for calculating the atmosphere of any of the bodies of the solar system.

In making those calculations, an important question presents itself. Are we to regard the waters that cover the lower valleys of the earth as planetary or atmospheric matter? Is the water of the ocean one of the special constituents of the earth, or only a portion of the universal atmospheric matter which the earth's gravitation has condensed around it?

This question may, perhaps, be answered by considering the known properties of water; which tell us that the position occupied by the water on our own, or any other planet, is entirely dependent on comparatively moderate variations of temperature and pressure. If the temperature of the earth were raised, or the atmospheric pressure diminished, in a sufficient degree, the whole of the water of the ocean would rise from its present bed, and take its place in the atmosphere as one of its constituent gases, and would there exist in a state exactly corresponding to the carbonic acid of our actual atmosphere; that is, as a mixture, not a chemical combination, with it. We only require the conditions which actually exist on the planet Mercury to bring this about. On that planet, in all probability, water can only exist as a gas and a regular constituent of the atmosphere. If Mercury has had its Faraday, he may have succeeded in demonstrating the condensability of this gas. By refrigeration and pressure, he may have produced liquid water and water-snow, and, by the aid of mechanical devices, have obtained sufficient quantities to exhibit them as lecture-table curiosities. The Mercurians would certainly regard water as purely atmospheric matter.

Mr. Williams agrees with the Mercurians in including water among the original constituents of the general atmospheric medium, and in concluding that the water upon our earth is but a portion of the matter which its gravitation has collected from the all-pervading medium of the universe. Certainly there would be good reason to believe that gaseous water is one of the most important constituents of the general atmospheric medium. If it exists there in the same proportion that the water of our globe bears to the permanently gaseous constituents of our atmosphere, it must constitute above ninety per cent of the whole. The spectroscope, whether directed to the envelopes of the sun, to the stars, or the nebulæ, tells of "water, water, everywhere;" the state of its existence (whether solid, fluid, or gaseous, whether combined as water, or separated into its constituents of free hydrogen and free oxygen) being dependent on the physical conditions to which it is subjected.

Mr. Williams calculates the pressure of the sun's atmosphere upon any given area of his surface as equal to the pressure of fifteen thousand two hundred and thirty-three earthly atmospheres. Those figures are only approximative, but are under rather than overstated, because any estimate of the diameter of the body of the sun must be of a most hypothetical and doubtful character. Putting together and comparing the various descriptions of different observers, there are good grounds for concluding that the real body of the sun has never been seen at all.

The most important result, our author infers, of such a vast accumulation of solar atmosphere, is the evolution of heat which must be produced by the compression of the lower strata. If the pressure that can be exerted by the human hand upon the piston of a condensing syringe is capable, in spite of the surrounding conductors, of producing sufficient heat to ignite a piece of German tinder, what must be the consequence of the enormous pressure of this vast atmosphere!

Now, all the records of human observation indicate that, during the historical period, no sensible increase or diminution of the solar light and heat has occurred; and the incomparably older records of geological history point to the same conclusion. No theory of the sources of solar heat and light can be sound which fails to explain this degree of permanency. There also exists in the human mind an almost

irresistible à priori belief in the permanency of the universe, which is usually strongest in those who have the most deeply studied its mechanism. A further examination shows that no extinction of the sun — even at the remotest conceivable period—no gradual diminution of his energies, need be feared; but that when once a certain normal amount of radiation has been attained, it will be maintained eternally both by our sun and by all the other suns that are surrounded by dependent planets. The fresh supply of fuel is supplied by the progressive motion of the greater orbs and the reacting gravitation of their attendant worlds. The process is assumed to take place in this wise:

Our sun is travelling through space with a velocity which has been computed at from four to five hundred thousand miles per day. Now, if the hypothesis of an universal atmosphere is correct, the sun must, of necessity, encounter some resistance in his passage through it. This resistance will obviously be applied to the outer regions of his atmosphere, which, being fluid, will yield to such resistance, and a portion will be left behind. But the sun will obtain his share of the general medium, which of course will be obtained from that portion of space into which he is progressing.

Let us now see what will be the amount of the fresh fuel thus supplied to the sun. The daily supply will be equal in bulk to the contents of a cylinder having a diameter equal to that of the sun and his attendant atmosphere, and whose length is four or five hundred thousand miles. Taking this diameter at nine hundred thousand miles, and the length of the cylinder at four hundred and fifty thousand miles, its cubic contents will be 286,278,300,000,000,000 cubic miles. Mr. Williams assumes that the interstellar atmosphere has a density of only one hundred-thousandth part of that of our atmosphere at the level of the sea. A cubic mile of such rarefied air would weigh rather more than fifty tons. The total weight of the daily cylinder of fresh fuel will thus be in round numbers one hundred and sixty-five millions of millions of tons per second.

But the furnace of the sun, like our humble furnaces on earth, requires not only a continuous supply of fuel, but a stoker to feed and stir it. Now, the planetary attendants of the sun perform this duty with untiring vigilance and efficiency. The actual effect of planetary gravitation on the sun is to produce a disturbance of the kind required, although in a most irregular manner. The planetary motions are so complex, and their relative positions are so perpetually changing, that the position of the general centre of gravity, in relation to the mass of the sun, is never the same for two consecutive seconds. In all probability, the greater portion of the bulk of the sun consists of gaseous matter, and the "nucleus" is only a comparatively small kernel in the midst of the gaseous mass. These forces, therefore, are quite sufficient to produce an enormous amount of disturbance in the solar atmosphere—a complication of clashing tides, and the consequent formation of mighty maelströms, vortices and cyclones, hurricanes and tornadoes, of fury inconceivable to the dwellers upon this comparatively tranquil earth. Whether we regard the nucleus of the sun as reeling irregularly in the midst of his profound fluid envelope, or his atmosphere as dragged here by Jupiter, there by Venus, hither by the Earth, thither by Saturn, and everywhere in the mean time by the vivacious Mercury, we cannot fail to perceive in planetary attraction an agent for perpetually stirring up and mingling together the various strata of the solar atmosphere. By means of this agency, the vigorous and newly-arriving fuel must be whirled into the midst of the sun's photosphere, while huge upheavals of thermally-exhausted matter must find their way again to the upper regions of the rarefied atmosphere, where that matter will be cooled by re-expansion below the general temperature of the inter-planetary medium, and then swept round and carried into the wake of the sun.

That an actual connexion between the disturbances of the solar atmosphere and the position of the planets does exist, is shown by the observations of Mr. Carrington, who finds that the varying distances of Jupiter affect the development of spots, which are more abundant when this planet is furthest from the sun. M. Rudolph Wolf, of Berne, has observed that, besides the well-known period of a little more than eleven years, there is also another period of maximum spot-development of about fifty-six years, which Mr. Balfour Stewart has shown to correspond very nearly with the epoch at which Jupiter and Saturn come to aphelion together.

Mr. Grove, in his inaugural address to the British Association, 1866, propounded the following questions: "Our sun, our earth, and planets are constantly radiating

heat into space; so in all probability are the other suns, the stars, and their attendant planets. What becomes of the heat thus radiated into space? If the universe has no limit—and it is difficult to conceive one—there is a constant evolution of heat and light; and yet more is given off than is received by each cosmical body, for otherwise night would be as light and as warm as day. What becomes of the enormous force thus apparently non-recurrent in the same form? Does it return as palpable motion? Does it move, or contribute to move, suns and planets?"

Mr. Williams thinks he may venture to answer those questions, having shown that the heat thus radiated into space is received by the general atmospheric medium; is gathered again by the breathing of wandering suns, who inspire, as they advance, the breath of universal heat, and light, and life; then by impact, compression, and radiation, they concentrate and redistribute its vitalising power; and after its work is done, expire it in the broad wake of their retreat, leaving a track of cool exhausted ether—the ashpits of the solar furnaces—to reabsorb the general radiations, and thus maintain the eternal round of life.

Let us glance at the condition which this theory of a universal atmosphere would assign to some of the members of our solar system.

The mass and dimensions of the planet Venus approximate so closely to those of the earth, that the density of its atmosphere should only differ from ours by so small a fraction that we may consider it as about the same. The only important meteorological differences between Venus and the earth would be those due to its greater proximity to the sun, and the greater inclination of the plane of its equator to that of its orbit. In the first place, there should be land and water, as upon the earth; but as the quantity of heat received from the sun by Venus is nearly double that which comes to the earth, the atmosphere should be thickly loaded with aqueous vapour. This again would moderate the action of the sun upon the surface of the planet itself. So far, we have the conditions of a hot, humid, equable climate as compared with that of the earth; but then the inclination of the axis, producing such extreme variations between the summer and winter of the temperate and polar regions, would seriously disturb this equalising influence of the aqueous vapour. Venus should be a foggy, cloudy, and rainy planet, with some polar snow during winter, and probably polar glaciers. The evenings of Venus would be, like ours, lighted by twilight, and the mornings by the dawn.

The cloudiness of this planet is further indicated by the differences of the statements of observers respecting the permanent markings on its surface. According to Mr. Williams, the observations of the surface of Venus have to be made through the veil of a misty atmosphere, such as must always prevail over this planet, even though absolutely opaque clouds should be absent. The effect of this mistiness would be to render the outline forming the boundary between land and sea very obscure and difficult to define, except under the most favourable circumstances. Venus ought to be habitable by plants and animals not widely different from terrestrial creatures.

The total atmosphere of Mars should be about one-twentieth of our own, and the atmospheric pressure on the surface of the planet about one-fifth and a half of ours. The mercurial barometer would stand at about five and a half inches at the sea level of Mars, and water should boil at one hundred and thirty-eight degrees Fahrenheit. The bulk of the atmospheric water on Mars must be condensed or frozen. The proportion of the area of land to that of water on the earth being one of land to three of water, there should be on Mars about five of land to three of water. The seas of Mars must be frozen to the bottom, but the surface of the water on all parts of the planet, which are exposed with only moderate obliquity to the sun's rays, would be thawed to a depth varying with the circumstances. Its surface would thus be thawed during the day and frozen again at night, like the surface of our own Alpine glaciers. A little before sunset, a feathery dew of hoar-frost should begin to fall.

There would be no great, well-defined masses of vapour floating, like our clouds, in the atmosphere of Mars; no cumulus, no cumulo-stratus, nor even cirro-cumulus clouds; nothing denser than a thin mist of ice crystals, like that which, in our atmosphere, makes halos round the moon. Contrary to not a few astronomers, Mr. Williams maintains that the climate and meteorology of Mars differ so greatly from our own, that none of the creatures of this world could live upon Mars.

Jupiter and Saturn are a couple of proud planets, swelling themselves to the dimensions and quality of suns. Jupiter's total atmosphere should be six thousand two hun-

dred and thirty-two times that of the earth. His mercurial barometer would be one hundred and thirty-four feet high. The temperature of the lower regions of his atmosphere is about the melting point of cast iron. All the water on Jupiter is now, and will permanently remain, in a state of vapour. Owing to the depth of this vaporous atmosphere, there is no evidence that we have as yet ever seen the kernel within the outer shell of Jupiter. It is extremely probable that Jupiter must have manifested some degree of general solar phenomena, and that, if we could see him shaded from the solar rays, he would appear like a phosphorescent ball, by the illumination of his vaporous envelope, due to the light it absorbs from the glowing world within. Jupiter, moreover, has probably reached his permanent temperature, so that there is no hope of his being turned to agricultural purposes.

It is vexing that the results of recent research tend to deprive us of the pleasing dream of the plurality of worlds. Most people gave up Mercury as too hot to hold them; and they now find themselves obliged to give up Mars, although they still retain some hopes of Venus's capability as a residence. But it is provoking to find some, at least, of the superior planets, whose greater distance from the sun lead us to expect them to be cool, turning out to be little suns themselves. Time was, not so very long ago, when we were taught that beneath the great sun's photosphere, and veiled from the ardour of its rays, there were happy valleys, in which gentlemen, in blue cotton shirts and nankeen trousers, might devote their time to the culture of melons, without even the protcction of a parasol. What do fashionable savants tell us now? That life is a series of disillusions.

THOUGHTS ON PUFFING.

With the enormous crowd of bright particular advertisements staring at us in every violent and fiery hue from pillar, post, and hoarding, it might be curious to speculate what special feelings or motives are working in the public mind, and are at the bottom of this extraordinary development of advertising. The change within a few years is amazing. Development, indeed, is not the proper description; it is rather the introduction of a new art or department. Formerly, the sole object of a placard or advertisement was to give the public information—notice that some event was to take place, that some play was to be performed, or some book was to be published. The occasional "dead wall" was consecrated to this office, and its decaying surface was turned to a useful and honourable purpose. Now, walls, dead and living, flaunt, and flare, and blaze with proclamations, competing with each other, struggling to attract notice, screaming, as it were, tossing their limbs wildly, flourishing every known colour, as who should say, "Look at me! Look at me! Not at him! Not at him!" Not only are stray and unoccupied walls, or short-lived hoardings, taken advantage of, but new structures—vast screens—are put up, on which these polychromatic names may flaunt and flash. Rooms, walls, railways, every spare space conceivable, are thus decorated with names and addresses. The title of a play, or of a new candle, jogs by at a slow trot in front of the knees of the outsides of an omnibus; it glares at us from the roof of a railway carriage, from the gallery of a railway station, from the walls of a waiting-room, from the tax-gatherer's notice, and even from the drop-scene of a theatre.

A curious speculation connected with this profuse advertising is as to how the system is found to work on the public mind. The theory is, that the fact of seeing the one name and address repeated in every direction that we turn to, must be an argument for, or even a proof of, excellence; a conclusion certainly illogical. A little margin might be allowed for human laziness, which would be appealed to after this fashion. For this ready information saves us the trouble of choosing or seeking out, and supplies us at once with name and address. But, still, the other influence prevails in the main. Even for minds of strong sense there is a lurking feeling that what is known to us from repetition must have something to recommend it; there is even the feeling of goodwill from the familiarity; just as the British playgoer likes his old jokes, at which he has laughed "these twenty years," as Diggory did at "ould grouse in the gun-room," served up again and again to him. The wisest and most sober cannot deny this superficial influence. What we are told again and again, leaves at last an impression of respect. The feeling is no doubt akin to that on which general impostors trade in society, in politics, and in literature, and by which some flashy, showy man attracts the public without real

qualities. The world, in truth, likes these plain appeals to its desires, and dislikes all troublesome appeals to its judgment and intellect. These gaudy descriptions save it trouble, and tickle both eye and ear; and it may be affected, in a small degree, like the rustic from some agricultural district come up to "Lunnun," who thinks everything "in print" and gaudy colours must stand for truth and reality in its strictest shape. Advertisers and flourishers know perfectly well that even the gravest and most cautious are to a certain length touched by their appeals, and that even in the act of denunciation, the most careful often find themselves seduced.

But the truth is, in this world sheer labour and industry always make themselves felt. This is a theory that would be dear to Mr. Carlyle as representing something real and genuine. Work, he would tell us, is never thrown away. Men who spend sums of money, and sums of trouble and toil, together with much ingenious polychromatic device in flourishing their names and wares, are pretty certain to find such bread as they have cast upon the waters returning to them. The wise who travel in the underground railways and see "Kitto's Starch" staring at them from over the heads of their vis-à-vis in the carriages, or the "Grasshopper Sewing Machine," no doubt salute those titles with a "pish!" and a "pshaw!" But later, as their eye wanders over the newspaper or dead wall, or live hoarding, or omnibus knife-board, or fly-leaf of magazine, and sees everywhere, as a murderer does blood, "Kitto's Starch," "Grasshopper Sewing Machine," a kind of dull, insensible impression is produced. By-and-bye, when either of these important necessaries are in demand in the reader's family, and when there is an impression of doubt or ignorance, the poor aide-de-camp of conceit, or conscious superiority, steps in, and aids the advertiser. Where all are groping in the dark, it is hard to resist the conscious sense of superiority. "Starch! Why, there is a fellow called Kitto, who seems to be in great demand; at least his name is everywhere. Sewing machine! Get the Grasshopper—only four guineas." It will thus be seen that advertising owes a good deal to the pardonable little infirmities of our nature.

This feeling of attraction and partiality being thus produced exactly in proportion to the diligent and costly nature of the advertisement, it is surprising that we, the public, do not reflect that all this must represent a vast enhancement of the cost of the article. A moment's reflection would show us that this spurious prestige of name, as compared with the meagre reputation of articles not thus heralded, must make an enormous difference in the price. But no. If anything, they are cheaper. This, in fact, is the claim they boast to our attention. Who, then, defrays the cost of proclamation? The article itself, which, in a manner, must be mulcted and made inferior. There is no other solution. Granting that the article is superior to its rivals, it ought to be far dearer in price to cover the cost of its advertisement, but this would be fatal to its success; and in most instances there must be an inferiority.

We might imagine Goldsmith's Citizen of the World coming to town, wandering through this great city, and asking, with amazement, the meaning of the gaudy and bewildering inscriptions which would meet his eye at every turn. He would be told they were the names of persons, their addresses, and of various articles made by them. He would speculate thoughtfully over this information, and would at last arrive at a solution. "Ah! it was as in a time of famine or of scarcity. These things and persons are difficult to discover. Their goods are scarce, and this information is welcome." On the contrary, he is told that there is an over-supply of these merchants and their articles; that at every street and alley they are to be found; and that it is actually in consequence of the superfluity and superabundance that this method of appealing to the public is adopted. It would be hard to get him to understand more than this. It is wonderful, indeed, how the system has developed, and is developing. It now requires skilled agents, professional adepts, to work it. Wherever there is space of any description, no such remunerative disposition of it can be made as by advertising. The letters grow larger, the colour more garish every day. Sometimes we see the whole side of some tall house all ablaze with gigantic characters, which not only those who run, but those who gallop, and who travel by limited mail even, can read. To pass by the enclosure of the houses levelled for the new Law Courts is enough to give one a nightmare. For there, the space being so ample, the situation so advantageous, from the enormous traffic passing and repassing, running and reading, the system seems literally to riot in all the vagaries of com-

petition. There a simpering lady of some eight or ten feet high curls her finger, as if to make an appointment, and displays an enormous bulk of hair, the result of Mrs. Allen's treatment. There the Daily Telegraph proudly trumpets that it has the largest circulation in the world; the horn of the Standard competes angrily, and lays vigorous claim to being the largest broad-sheet in the world. There the cabalistic "Ozokerit" tormented the minds of the passers-by for months; and there the daring performance of some "Brothers," vividly portrayed on a bill of the dimensions of a small theatrical scene, entertains the eyes as well as the mind. Now the picture of the battle at the Agricultural Hall shows French and Germans destroying each other on a vast scale, while the blessings of peace are illustrated by innumerable young ladies, who, bent over rival sewing-machines, exhibit models of decorous and interesting industry. Now, again, an enormous face, whose corresponding body, if it came into being, would reach half-way up Dr. Johnson's St. Clement's Danes Church, presents us with a terrible enlargement of the countenance of the ingenious Mr. Woodin.

In short, a more mysterious jumble of letters, shows, pictures, and colours, it would be hard to conceive. Here is the latest enormous panorama, for such it is, or apotheosis of Neptune, crowned, with all his monsters and Tritons rising from the billows, which makes a sort of Turneresque pageantry of advertisement, spreading over the hoarding in a free high art fashion. This is "Sea Moss Farine;" and this gaudy mythological picture pursues us in every direction. The persevering young ladies who are walking with umbrellas have thrust out the gentleman who was always in a storm of wind and rain struggling with his, which was determined to turn itself inside out. Here, again, is the cake with the mincing gentleman, and the dainty young lady in the veil, preparing to cut it up, and the news overhead that some thousand or so of these articles are always kept in stock. Here is to be seen the vast garden, of a rather yellowish green, which a young lady in a hat, attended by a child, is watering diligently with a force-pump. But the most assiduous proclaimer of his own merits is a certain West-end silk-mercer, who has become like a household word from his never-flagging invitations to try silks. As we travel in the railway carriages he whispers in our ear — indeed the underground line seems to be his special hunting-ground, where in all the sheen and glory of enamelled iron he blazes out his trophies. There are galleries in this subterranean region, which cross the line aloft for the convenience of passengers, and across its balustrades is displayed, on vast sheets of gaudy metal, all the style and title of the silk-mercer: an inscription about fifty feet in length. No one, not even the traveller from New Zealand himself, could avoid being impressed by a name exhibited so persistently.

Seriously, this last gigantic exhibition suggests, in practical shape, the thought that this practice has reached the limits of an abuse, and that there must be a large section of the public, the majority in fact, who are sensible and experienced, and not to be attracted by such baits. These are fairly entitled to such entertainment as an intellectual and cultivated person, living in a great city, ought to find for their eyes and thoughts as they walk abroad. Now to find one's eyes settling on these monstrous placards wherever they turn, these rarees-shows of cartoons and colours daubed on, certainly becomes a daily and hourly pain. There is no such cheap and pleasant education for a people as handsome out-door objects, elegant vistas and buildings, beautiful statues, choice architecture. These things, grown familiar, humanise almost better than a dozen school boards. But if instead of these we have this mercantile vulgarity staring from every coigne of vantage, this glorified shopkeeping, which can only raise associations of the prosy and baser incidents of trade, the result must only be a steady and progressive vulgarisation. Any one who would vividly realise this truth for himself, need only become a frequent passenger on the underground lines, from whose stations he will find himself emerging with a steadily increasing sense of distaste, and a low tone of moral feeling. In fact, the New Zealand citizen before alluded to, taken to a series of these stations, would naturally conclude, from the gigantic name that runs across all the galleries, that this tradesman was a sort of deified potentate, in whose honour these subterranean temples were erected. The conclusion would be quite legitimate. But the notion is a false and corrupt one; for a light iron gallery, if artistically constructed, is an object of interest, and leaves an airy and elegant impression; but if it be converted into a Patagonian sign-board, with the enormous name of an ordinary shopkeeper sprawling over

it, the limit is passed. It becomes an affront to the travelling public. The worst of it is that we seem to be only at the beginning of this abuse. Our newspapers are swelling into vast unmanageable advertising sheets, and what is more significant still, tradesmen's goods are being dragged on the stage itself for the purpose of puffery. And this unworthy use of theatres proves yet more clearly how much our other public amusements are likely to be interfered with as the abuse develops. For, after paying a sufficient price to be amused, we naturally resent having our eyes entertained by these business circulars and shopkeeping allurements.

On the whole, therefore, it may be fair to consider whether the matter has not been pushed too far, and whether there is not room for reform.

MISS PONSONBY'S COMPANION.

In Twelve Chapters.

CHAPTER IX. THE LETTER-CASE.

The moment the front door slammed upon the superintendent, Miss Ponsonby, regardless of all his instructions, rang the bell furiously for Mercy.

That worthy glided into the room with her usual hypocritical deference and cat-like softness. She at least acted up to the superintendent's ideal in this respect. The old lady sat brooding over the fire as absorbed and gloomy as one of the sibyls. Horrible suspicions were passing through her mind. She had lost all faith in everything and every one. In youth these moments of disenchantment are terrible; but they are more terrible still in age. Old age has less hope, and clings to its small certainties as a miser clings to his gold. To lose a friend, to lose trust in one whom we love then, is like losing a limb. Suspense was worse to Miss Ponsonby even than certainty. She would wrestle at once with the horrible suspicion that haunted her.

Mercy said nothing; but as she snuffed the two mould candles, whose long fungus wicks burned dim as the lights in a mortuary chapel, she stole a look at the old lady, who sat staring moodily at the fire. As Mercy had been listening at the door to the greater part of the conversation between her mistress and the superintendent, she was fully able to understand what weighed upon Miss Ponsonby's mind, and to decide how best to act in accordance with her own interest.

"I'm afraid, ma'am," she said, "that you ain't so well again. It has been too exciting for you seeing Mr. Humphries. But you mustn't take it so. You must remember how Job bore his losses. Ah! it is hard to bear, I know, and I used to say so when a fellow-servant at Mrs. Baldock's once stole a sovereign of mine, and I dwelt on it for weeks. I believe if I could I'd have brought that young woman to the gallows, because I'd earned the money so hard. My heart was unregenerate then, and my eyes weren't opened."

"Mercy," said Miss Ponsonby, suddenly rising, and seizing the hypocritical woman by the wrist, "if I could find who stole my ten-pound note I'd drag the thief to prison, if I had to do it with my own hands. Mercy, who is it? Who has robbed me? I've been a good mistress to you. I have told you that I have remembered you in my will. Tell me all you know."

Mercy was silent.

"For Heaven's sake tell me, Mercy. Tell me, at least, do you know any one in this house who writes letters to any person at Gypsum?"

"I'd rather not answer, ma'am. If I can't say good I wouldn't say harm."

"But, Mercy, you must tell," said Miss Ponsonby. "Mind it is not too late for me to alter my will. I have lost a second ten-pound note."

"A second?" stammered Mercy.

"I do not suspect you."

"God forbid!" groaned Mercy. "A second ten-pound note, is it possible? Oh, this wicked, wicked world!"

"Who took those two notes I must and will find out!" cried Miss Ponsonby, clutching the two arms of her chair convulsively with her thin bony hands; "and if you have any regard for me, you must, you must help me to find out."

"The Lord knows my heart," said Mercy, turning her eyes up to the ceiling.

"I ask you again, do you ever write letters to any one at Gypsum? Is any follower of yours living there? Now, no equivocation."

"Ever since that wicked young man, who was assistant at the undertaker's in High-street, borrowed ten shillings and left the town suddenly, promising to write to me the moment he got to London, I've allowed no young man to darken these doors. I never wrote to any one at Gypsum in my life."

"Have any letters directed to Gypsum ever left this house to your knowledge?"

"Must I answer that? Oh, don't ask that," said Mercy, with well-feigned reluctance.

"Yes, I do ask it, and I insist on a plain answer."

"Well, I have seen letters so directed that Susan was taking to the post. They were Miss Lilly's letters."

Miss Ponsonby sank into her chair, and hid her face in her hands; all she said was, "As I feared."

Mercy groaned audibly, hoped that all wicked persons' hearts would be softened, and that the innocent might not be confounded with the guilty; at the same time she expressed a hope that the missing notes might have, somehow, got by mistake into one of the books or papers that were on the table.

And as she said this, with a cold, cruel smile, she shuffled about the books on the table, searching among them, and by prearranged malice taking up a letter-case of Lilly's, held it so that the contents came partly out at one end, and a letter, stamped and directed for the post, fell out close to Miss Ponsonby's hand.

"What's this?" said the old lady, instantly clawing at it with irresistible suspicion and curiosity. "Why, Mercy, it's a letter in Lilly's writing directed to Robert Dawson, Esq., Eclipse Hotel, Gypsum. Now I see what you thought, and what the superintendent hinted. Now I see what he almost told me—what I put from me, and refused to think possible. Send Miss Dampier to me. I must see her before I see Mr. Tresham."

"Shall I take down Miss Lilly's letter for the post?" said Mercy, with affected ignorance of her mistress's meaning.

"No," said Miss Ponsonby, furiously. "Leave it. I must know more about this letter. Go and tell Miss Dampier I want to see her."

A moment or two after, Lilly came bounding into the room as bright and joyous as a summer morning; but the moment she entered, a chilly sense of terror struck her, she hardly knew why. Miss Ponsonby sat on the window-seat, staring out with a mournful, absorbed look at the darkness which, following the sunset, had brought with it heavy rain. In the silence you could hear the rain beating against the glass.

"Do you want me, dear aunt?" Lilly said, coming up and kissing the old lady on the cheek. I hope you feel better now."

Lilly was so happy herself that she wished all the world to be happy too. "Why, you seem low."

"I have a question to ask you," said Miss Ponsonby, turning round with a look that petrified Lilly.

"Well, dear aunt, there is nothing that I could keep secret from you;" and she blushed at the thought that her very happiness was betraying the love with which her heart was overflowing.

"You have no secret. Well, then, tell me with whom you correspond at Gypsum."

Lilly was silent, and surprised.

"Do not deny that you do so. You cannot, for here is the letter."

As she said this, with the tone of an angry accuser, Miss Ponsonby lifted the writing-case, which lay on the table, and drew from underneath it the letter.

"That is my letter," Lilly said, in a low, disturbed voice, and stretched her hand slowly towards it, but without any marked anxiety or apprehension.

The vindictive eyes of the old woman were fixed on her like those of a cat upon a mouse—cold, relentless, and with a certain sense of cruel enjoyment.

"Mr. Dawson," said Lilly, "is a—a friend of mine, a friend of my father's."

"And did I not expressly tell you," said the old woman, tapping the table fretfully with the fingers of her right hand, "that one condition of my taking you as a companion, and admitting you to all this ease and comfort, was that you should cease all acquaintance, and not write to all the low people with whom your father associates?"

"I thought, aunt," said Lilly, somewhat indignantly, for she had not been accustomed to such insults, "that I came as your companion, not as your slave. I made no promise not to write to old friends."

"So, girl, you refuse to tell me who this man Dawson is?"

"I do. I love you very much, dear aunt, but I will not submit to such a cruel restriction of my liberty. I should be above suspicion."

"So this is the reward for all my kindness. You have a proud and wicked nature, Lilly. You must pray against this spirit. You are bold enough now, but do you dare open that letter in my presence. I have no wish to read it. Come, open the letter!"

"Dare!" said Lilly. "I know no right that you have to make such a request, or what end is obtained by it. What have I

to conceal, aunt? Give me the letter, and you shall see it opened as you wish."

Lilly took the letter, as her aunt handed it to her with a malign smile, and tore open the envelope.

"Now open the letter."

Lilly did so, and a half bank-note fell out and drifted across the floor to Miss Ponsonby's foot.

"What is that?" said the old lady, snatching at it with kite-like eagerness.

"That is half a five-pound note; half my first quarter's salary."

"Five pounds! It is the lost note. You know it, and it was you who stole it," screamed Miss Ponsonby, striking her hand upon the table, then, going to the bell, she pulled it violently.

Mercy so instantaneously appeared, that it would not have been uncharitable to suppose that she had been listening at the key-hole.

"Mercy!" screamed the old harridan, who had no compassion in that moment of triumph, "I have found at last who stole my ten pounds. Tell Mr. Tresham to come up. Say I am ready to see him now."

"No, no," cried Lilly, roused from the trance of wonder into which the first terrible words of accusation had cast her, as by an enchantment, as she flung herself at her aunt's knees, and seized her hand. "No, no; you will not do that. You will not degrade me and trample upon me before him. I am innocent. Before God himself I swear that I am innocent. This is my own money. You cannot be cruel enough to think me guilty of such a crime."

"Mercy," said the inexorable woman, "do as I bid you. All this repentance comes too late. The whole world shall know of this wicked girl's ingratitude. If I do not throw her into prison, I will at least send her back degraded to her father."

"You may send me back to my father," said Lilly, proudly rising, "but you cannot degrade me, for I am innocent. He will believe that I am innocent."

"Why do you delay, Mercy?"

Mercy delayed because she exulted in the distress of the once light-hearted, happy girl, who had stood in her way.

"Oh, do not, do not let Mr. Tresham hear this cruel charge." And Lilly, weeping passionately, cast herself again at the knees of the inexorable old woman. Mercy went. A step on the stairs roused Lilly; before Frank Tresham could enter she had risen, and stood mournfully by the window.

The moment Miss Ponsonby had shaken hands with Tresham she relapsed into the passionate excitement in which she had previously indulged. "You see I'm very excited and very ill," she said. "It may be as well to——"

Tresham cast a glance at Lilly; he could see something had happened, but what he could not at all imagine. The old lady continued:

"You remember being here when I lost that ten-pound note? I have just discovered who stole it."

"I am very glad you have," said Tresham; "it must relieve your mind greatly. How was it stolen? Who was the thief?"

"*There she stands!* You must ask her," said Miss Ponsonby, turning sharply round with that wiry irritable quickness peculiar to her, and pointing to Lilly. "And that is the way in which she requites her benefactor."

Tresham felt a cold pressure at his heart, a flickering movement before his eyes. The words seemed to reach him in a nightmare. He tried to speak, but his lips did not move. His gesture to Lilly was almost imperceptible.

Another moment and Lilly's hand was in his. "No, no, Frank," she sobbed. "I am innocent; I am innocent; you will not believe this of me. I am innocent. Save me from her. Do not let her——"

"Oh, I see," said Miss Ponsonby, drawing herself up very straight. "Oh, that's it, is it? Perhaps Miss Dampier, then, will tell Mr. Tresham what she will not tell me—who this Mr. Dawson is with whom she corresponds at Gypsum?"

"No, Frank; you love me too much not to have confidence in me. Do not ask me that."

"I do not want to know, Lilly," said Frank at once, as he soothed her. "My confidence in you is entire. I would as soon believe an angel to be guilty of the theft as you, Lilly."

Lilly made no answer, but their hands remained clasped together.

"Poor infatuated young man," said Miss Ponsonby. Mercy, who had glided into the room, groaned audibly.

"Three days from this time," said Miss Ponsonby, turning to Lilly, "you leave this house."

"Lilly and I are betrothed, Miss Ponsonby," said Tresham, "and I could not allow her to stay in any house where sus-

picion rested upon her. I will take her and deliver her to her father."

The wind had risen now, wild and blustering, almost as if taking a cruel delight in the sufferings of poor Lilly. It assailed at once every nook and corner of Miss Ponsonby's house, roared down the chimneys, rattled at the windows, shook at the doors, whistled maliciously at the key-holes, as if all the evil spirits that work man mischief had banded together to force an entrance into that habitation, and to wreak their spite on the inmates. The two old elms, racked and tormented by the same untiring enemy, writhed under the torture; and as for the two bay-trees, it was all they could do to maintain their position as steadfast sentries on duty for ever at the steps.

Heedless of the uproar without, Frank and Lilly stood by the ashes of the parlour fire, she sobbing, he trying to console her with kisses, assurances of changeless love, and words of hope and comfort. He suggested that she should, as soon as possible, return to her father, to whom he could at once write, requesting his consent to their marriage.

"The cloud will pass, Lilly," he said, "and the thief will be detected. All will be sunshine again. Humphries will show these people in a moment that their suspicions are absurd. The note in your letter is no evidence."

"How can I return home, Frank," said Lilly, through her tears, "with this dark stain upon me? I know not what to do, but I know that God will guide me if I pray to him. No, do not ask me to go, Frank, dear. I must not leave dear aunt, now that she is so ill, though she has been so cruel."

"She will need great care, Lilly, after all this excitement," said Frank, "and you are an angel to still love one who has so wronged you. Her symptoms are not favourable. I will send some medicine that she must take at daybreak. Be sure that Mercy gives it her."

"I sleep on the sofa in her room," said Lilly, "since she has been worse, and I will give it her myself."

Then, after several partings, came at last the real one.

CHAPTER X. TWO HOURS AFTER MIDNIGHT.

With many groans and sighs Miss Ponsonby tried to sleep. Her sharp thin pale face looked sharper and thinner than ever, as it lay on the pillow framed in a frilled night-cap. One by one the sounds of life in the house died out. First Lilly heard Mercy bolt and lock the front door. Then Susan's quick step passed on the stairs as she ran by as fresh as if she had just got up, and was going off to work. Then came a low shuffling step, and a tap at the door. It was Mercy with the plate-box and the keys of the house.

"Who is that?" said Miss Ponsonby, in a weak, querulous voice. She was afraid and distrustful now of every one and everything.

Mercy opened the heavy orange bed-curtains of the old-fashioned four-post bed, and gazed at her mistress with a look outwardly sympathising and hypocritical.

"How is the dear lady now?" she said, as she arranged the pillow with a sharp vindictive glance at Lilly, who sat by the fire reading.

"Very ill—very ill, Mercy," said Miss Ponsonby, querulously. "What a noise you have been making with the bolts. Why does that girl Susan wear those creaking boots? I've told her of it scores of times; and every sound goes through my head."

"Shall I lock the plate in the next room, ma'am?" said Mercy. "It is all right—I've counted it all."

"Yes, Mercy. Bring me the key—I'll trust it with no one; and get my cup of tea at seven, and mind it isn't cold as it was this morning. It's very easy to do things properly, yet everything, everything is neglected."

"I try to do my duty," said Mercy. "I've been carried through many trials patiently, and I try to remember all those little ways that Mrs. Baldock, blessed soul, used to like; if I don't always——"

"There, there, that will do. I'm ill and worried. You mustn't mind what I say. You've been a good, faithful servant to me, Mercy, and I shan't forget it, as I've often told you, but go now. I'm too weak to talk."

"Good-night, ma'am. Good-night, Miss Lilly." This last wish was enunciated in a dry, unsympathetic voice.

The door closed softly, almost inaudibly, on Mercy.

"What a good, considerate soul that is!" said Miss Ponsonby to Lilly.

Lilly instantly flew to the bedside, and knelt down.

"Lilly, it was not I who first suspected you. It was what the superintendent said.

I don't yet know all his reasons. Perhaps they are insufficient. It was something about a letter that he told me that first set me against you; and, when I saw that letter of yours with the half-note in it, a sort of madness seized me. I still hope you did not take it. Tell me about that letter."

"No, aunt, dear; do not ask that. I cannot answer that. I am too proud to try and argue out my innocence with you. Your own heart should tell you I am not guilty. I leave my cause in God's hands. Time will perhaps reveal the thief."

"I don't know; I don't know what to think—what to do," said the old woman, turning her face from Lilly; "but let me sleep now if I can. I'll try to believe it, Lilly. Here, kiss me. Good-night."

At the chair by the fire Lilly knelt, and unseen angels descending breathed hope and comfort into her heart.

It was very still when the fire smouldered down from a white heat to a few red coals, and the light wavered and pulsed fainter and fainter on the ceiling. Darker and more numerous the grotesque shadows widened and widened, till there was more darkness in the room than light. An hour more and the ashes turned black, and sank together with a faint rustling movement, and the chest of drawers began to give forth strange sounds as if it were going to split in two.

Then, dressed as she was, Lilly, exhausted by excitement and watching, threw herself on the sofa-bed, which was in a corner of the window facing the vast structure in which Miss Ponsonby was now sleeping, dreaming, probably, of appalling burglaries. The wind had gone down, and a slant ray of the purest moonlight shone through the window, and fell in a silver band of pure and holy brightness on the corner of the sofa where Lilly slept, gleaming in lustre across the curtain that covered the bottom of Miss Ponsonby's bed.

It was two hours after midnight when Lilly awakened, roused by she knew not what, for the only sound audible when she sat up and listened was the mechanical pulse of the house—the clock beating on the stairs. Yes, there was a faint, creaking sound—once, twice, three times she could hear it on the stairs leading from the room overhead. Lilly listened, her heart beat fast, and seemed to swell larger and larger. The next moment the door of the bedroom moved softly back, and something came rustling and gliding past the curtains, which would have hidden the door from Lilly even if there had been a light in the room. It was some one with bare feet treading with extreme caution.

Lilly dared not scream, but lay listening and watching what would happen. The figure moved past the sofa-bed, and round by the fireside, to a small table on which were glasses, some jelly, and the phial of medicine, which was to be taken at daybreak. There was a sound then of uncorking a bottle, some liquid was emptied on the coals, and there was a gurgling sound as of liquid poured into a bottle. Then the figure glided back again round the bed, to where Lilly lay. A cold dew of terror rose on Lilly's forehead, as she lay there in the darkness, almost fancying the phosphorescent gleam that she saw before her own closed eyes would betray her to the thief, murderer, or phantom, whichever it was, that stood over her; she could hear her heart beating so loud, that the sound seemed to fill the whole room.

But the figure moved on cautiously towards the slant ray of moonlight. As it passed it, the face turned. It was Mercy, pale and corpse-like in that divine radiance, her eyes fixed, her lips white and close-pressed in a sardonic smile. There was a small bottle clutched in one of her hands. She was visible for but an instant. She glided out of the door, closing it softly after her, and pressing the lock back slowly and with extreme caution. Then there were the faint sounds on the stairs again, and then all was still as death.

The moment that quietness was perceptible, Lilly, by an almost instinctive impulse, leaped quietly from the sofa, went to the table, felt for the bottle of medicine, and thrust it under her pillow.

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THE ROSE AND THE KEY.

CHAPTER XVIII. DRESSING-GOWNS AND SLIPPERS.

CAPTAIN BAMME, who has been entertaining the young lady, is taking his leave. The doctor says good-night at the same time, and walks down the old avenue in the long streak of moonlight between the shadows of the trees in company with the captain, who is eloquent upon the treason against the peace and decency of the town perpetrated by old Foljambe in the importation of his Irish curate.

"I hope I have a proper respect for everything that's sacred; but, by Jove, if a fellow behaves like a rowdy, parson or no parson, sooner or later, he'll get what he wants—a good licking; and I'd chuck him out of the window as soon as look at him:" a feat not only morally but physically worthy of admiration, considering the relative proportions of the curate and the captain.

The curate meanwhile has taken his departure, and very amicably, side by side with Mr. Smelt, is trudging after the captain and the doctor to the village. These apostolic men are manifestly deep in conversation, if we may so call a talk in which the loud and hilarious voice of the curate, interspersed with his peals of laughter echoing among the branches of the ancient trees, does duty for both. The captain quickens his pace on hearing these ominous sounds. He was going to light his cigar, but does not care to loiter, and with a sniff and a muttered word or two between his teeth, postpones that indulgence till he shall have reached the gate, where, as he knows, the curate turns to the right, and he to the left.

Mr. and Mrs. Foljambe, in their one-horse brougham, come rolling down the avenue, and oblige the fat dissenter to skip out of the way as their wheel grazes his elbow. He is, no doubt, grateful for his escape, but the fright does not abate his righteous abhorrence of prelatical pride; and the boisterous and unfeeling banter of the Reverend Michael Doody fails to soothe him as he stands gazing, for some seconds, after the equipage. The driver and the parson are of one mind no doubt. If he had been a bishop would they have made his "lordship" cut that terrified caper? His blood boils as he looks after the carriage. The mud of the wheel, he could swear, is upon his shoulder. He half regrets, for the sake of the moral and the scandal, that he was not knocked down. Perhaps if he had possessed presence of mind he would have gone down at that touch, as adroit pugilists sometimes do in the ring.

Notwithstanding this little incident, however, Mr. Smelt and the curate proceed, side by side, in very friendly march toward the town.

The churchman's jocularity has subsided, and he is now learning all he can about the religious state of the little town, and the statistics of its poverty, from the preacher at his side, who is puzzled a little by the unaffectedly secular demeanour of the curate, by his utter repudiation of the doctrine of apostolic succession, and by his earnest and simple desire to go to the heart of his work, and do some good in his generation.

From the cold moonlight, and still shadows of the foliage on the broad avenue, we return to the great drawing-room of Roydon and the glow of other lights, where the clear voice of Lady Vernon is saying to the tall, grey gentleman, with whom she has talked a good deal that evening, and who was on

the point of going out to light his bedroom candle, and make his way to his room:

"I don't think I have introduced my daughter."

The tall gentleman's eyes follow the direction of Lady Vernon's expectantly, and she says:

"Maud, I want to introduce you to Mr. Coke, who has been so good as to come with the papers for the trustees, who are coming to-morrow, and it may be right that you should be present."

The elderly attorney looked at the young lady with interest as he made his bow, and he thought how high-spirited, how high-bred, and beautiful she looked, and what a becoming representative of that great and ancient family she was.

"It is a good many years since I saw you, Miss Vernon, a long time in your life, that is—not in mine. You were only so high," he says, with the familiarity of an old retainer, measuring a standard in the air with his hand.

Ten minutes later they have broken up and gone to their rooms, and Maud, in her dressing-gown, with her long hair loose over her shoulders, taps at her Cousin Max's door, which is near her own.

"Who's there?"

"Maud. May I come in?"

"Come in, my dear child, to be sure."

Maximilla Medwyn is in her dressing-gown and slippers, and smiles — rather an odd figure, her dressing-gown being "skimpy," as her maid tells her often, and her head being bound up tightly in a long flannel band.

"What is the matter now?"

"Nothing. Only I could not rest till I had seen you again. Mamma received me to-day just as usual."

"She can't help it," replies Miss Medwyn. "My maid is gone to her bed; there's no one to hear us. She is the same to every one; it is her way; she was always cold. I tried to know her long ago —and I believe she liked me as well as she liked any one else—but I never could know her, young as she was. It is her nature, and she can't change it now."

"I wish I could be cold and reasonable like other people. I wish I could care nothing about it, but—I'm such a fool."

"You make too much of it."

"I can't help it, and whenever I do speak out, we quarrel. It is so miserable."

"You must treat different people differently, my dear, according to their natures. I make it a point to meet her just as coolly as she meets me," said Maximilla. "She was always an oddity. Why, nothing odder was ever heard of than her marriage with your poor father. To me she always seemed unfathomable. All I know about her is, that she has the strongest will I ever heard of, and that she looks, I think, like a haughty lady superioress of a convent. Very handsome, of course, we all see that; but with a countenance, it seems to me, incapable of sympathy, incapable of frankness, and dominated by pride, and dead to everything else."

"You are frank enough, at all events," says the young lady, a little dryly.

"Very frank always with you, Maud," replies the old cousin, seating herself on the sofa at the foot of her bed.

"I see more good in her than that," persists the girl.

"So do I; but not in her face. She has a great deal of good. She is generous; she is courageous; she has many very fine points. But she seems to me to hold every one on earth at arm's length; that's all I say. As for me, I gave up the idea of ever knowing her, twenty years ago. You must take her for what she is, and be content with so much love as she is capable of giving. She may give more than she shows, for anything we can tell, and I'm sure she'll do her duty. She has always been a pattern of all the virtues."

"Yes, conscience, a strong sense of duty, every one says that. I'm quite serious. But you said that she was odd. What was there about her marriage with papa?"

"Well, yes, that was extremely odd. I never was so surprised in my life. Your father had his baronetage, but that in your family was less than nothing; that title had been twice offered within the last hundred years to the Vernons of Roydon, and twice refused. He was a handsome man, and rather agreeable, and there ended his attractions. He had not a guinea. He was twenty years older than she. He liked nothing that she liked. He was a captain in the Guards, you know, and when he was ruined, had retired. He came down here, and tried to make love to her, without your grandfather's knowing anything about it; but she could not endure him, and treated him with utter contempt, and he grew to hate her. People thought, my dear, that he did not want anything but her money, and was furious at finding himself foiled. She certainly did hate him, then. He was of the same family—a Vernon—her third cousin."

"Was not grandmamma alive then?"

"Yes, but in miserable health—slowly dying, in fact. They went away for a little tour, somewhere—a fancy of the doctor's, I believe; when she returned, which was in less than a year, your father came here, uninvited and unwished for. I was here at the time. Barbara seemed to hate him more intensely than ever. She would not even see him. She spoke of him to me, when I asked her to come down and take her place as usual, with a degree of detestation I could not understand."

"Yet he was very gentle, I have always heard, and a great many people liked him," said Maud.

"I dare say. I only tell you what I saw," says Maximilla. "I need not tell you I did not want her to like him. I thought his courtship, all things considered, a most audacious thing; and I could not believe, after all that had passed, that he had any serious idea of renewing it."

"It was certainly very unequal in all things but birth," said Maud.

"Yes, you know, she might have married any one, and he had no pretensions. Your grandfather plainly did not like his being here, though he did not choose to turn him out. I don't think, indeed, he saw what Amerald Vernon was aiming at; but I could not help fancying that, for some reason, he was afraid of him. Your grandfather was a most upright, honourable man. If he had ever been a reckless young man, or among objectionable companions, I could have understood the possibility of his dreading some awkward disclosure. But his whole life had been transparent, and, in all respects, honourable; and this puzzled me, for I could not account for his seeming embarrassed and timid in his own house, and so uneasy while Amerald Vernon continued there. I had given up asking your mamma to appear as usual in her place while he was there. One morning, however, she did come down, hating him just as much as ever, but thinking, I fancied, that it was making him too important, keeping out of the way on his account. I remember so well her standing for a few minutes in the window, before breakfast, and his joining her there, and talking to her. They were both looking out, so I could not see their faces. But the next thing that happened was their taking a long walk, up and down the terrace, together, after luncheon; after that, her demeanour changed entirely; he seemed to exercise an unaccountable fascination over her; and one morning, in the drawing-room, she told me, as coldly as if it was a matter of going to take a drive, that she had made up her mind to marry Sir Amerald Vernon. I don't think I was ever so astounded in all my life. I remonstrated and represented all I could, but it was in vain; whatever his fascination was, it had prevailed, and I might as well have tried to lift the house from its foundations by my eloquence. She must have fallen in love with him. Her father always made a pet of her; too much, indeed. She would, perhaps, under other management, have learned to be less wilful and less haughty. So, I suppose, he let her do as she pleased. But the end of it was that she did marry him; and, I think, her liking, if there was any, expired before two months were over, for when I saw them next, she seemed—begging your pardon, my dear—to hate him as much as ever. They did not quarrel; I don't mean that. She was too cold and dignified for any such exhibitions. But I could not mistake her. There was fixed dislike. And when, two years later, he lost his life by the fall of his horse, I don't think she cried a single tear, and I never heard her speak of him, except now and then, as coolly and curtly as you might mention a not very pleasant acquaintance who had gone to Van Diemen's Land."

These recollections of Maximilla Medwyn's revived in Maud's mind a scene, which often recurred of itself.

It was one of those short scenes, in the remembrance of which fear and disgust are mingled; to disclosing which there grows an invincible repugnance, and on which the mind silently dwells with a sense of odious curiosity.

When she was a little thing, some five or six years of age, she was fond of old Margaret Creswell, who had been her mother's nurse. She used to run to her as a redresser of grievances, and to pour out her complaints and petitions at her knees. But a time came when her protectress was to take her last leave of her and of all things.

The old woman was dying, and found dying a hard and tedious piece of work. The child had not been in her room for four months, and one day, in a state of rebellion against some new rule of her mamma's, she broke from the nursery, and ran into old Margaret Creswell's room.

She was sitting up, in flannels, by the fire. The room was darkened. A little table, with her medicine bottles, her table-

spoon, and glasses, was beside her. With her one idea the child trotted into the room, prattled and sobbed through her story, and ended by saying, "And that wouldn't be done to me if papa was alive."

The figure in the flannels beckoned, and, for the first time, a little awe stole over the child; she drew near, trying to see her more distinctly in the obscurity. When she did, it was not the face she knew. There was no smile there. The face was hollow and yellow, a clammy blackness was about the lips, the eyes looked at her, large and earnest; the child came beside her, returning her strange gaze in silence. She was frightened that such a thing should be Maggie Creswell.

The old woman placed her bony hand on the child's arm, and clasped it feebly. She spoke in a hard whisper, with a little quick panting at every word.

"That's Anne Holt has been saying that; it's a shame to be putting things in your head against your good mamma. Well it is for you that you are under her, and not under him; no blacker villain ever lived on earth than your papa. Keep that to yourself; if you tell any one in the nursery, I'll come to you after I'm dead, and frighten you." She let go her arm, and said, "Go now to your toys, and do as mamma bids you, and be thankful."

Very much scared, and very quiet, the child stole back to the nursery, and kept the secret guarded by that menace.

That dark room; the old woman, stern and changed; the last words she was ever to hear from her; and the dreadful terms of hatred applied to her father, which she tried to put away as a blasphemy, returned often, and drew her into conjecture.

"Was there any reason," she asked her Cousin Max, after a little silence, "for mamma's want of affection for poor papa?"

"No particular reason—no good reason. As a husband, I don't think there was anything against him. He devoted himself very much to his duties, and did his best to become a popular and useful country gentleman. I suppose she repented too late, and had acted on an impulse, and was disgusted to find, as many of us are, that the past is irrevocable."

Old Miss Maximilla sighed. Perhaps she had a retrospect to regret, and Maud, with the world before her, looked for a moment on the carpet sadly.

"I don't know your mamma, my dear; she has been always a sealed book to me. I don't think she ever wanted either sympathy or advice. I don't think any one ever knew her. *I* never could, and I have long given up the riddle. But, dear me, it is almost one o'clock. Run away, my dear, and let your poor old cousin get to her bed. I shan't go for a day or two, and we shall have time enough; I have fifty things to talk to you about. Good-night." And so they parted till next morning.

CHAPTER XIX. BREAKFAST.

At half-past nine in the morning, the roar of the gong spreads shivering and swelling through rooms and passages, up staircases, great and small, through lobbies and long galleries, calling all the inmates of Roydon Hall to prayers.

In a long room which projects, at the end, in a mass of stone-shafted window, they assemble. A hundred years ago, and more, the then Vernon of Roydon gave to this great chamber, as nearly as he could, the character of a chapel. The light streams in through stained glass, brought from Antwerp tradition says, flaming from the base up to the cornice with sacred story. The oak carving of this sombre room is admired by critics, who say that the spoils of some ancient church must have furnished it. Mr. Coke, the elderly attorney, with his head full of the strategy of the consulting-room and the rhetoric of the courts, is for a moment solemnised, as he enters and looks round him. He then falls to admiring, in detail, the stained glass. He and Miss Max are the only guests at present in the house. It is a very small party confronting so imposing an array of servants. There is hardly another house in England where so prodigious a household assembles. Mr. Coke, whose business brings him, about settlements and at other legal crises, to many noble houses, is struck by the unusual superfluity of servant-kind here, and while Mr. Penrhyn, Lady Vernon's secretary, who officiates, is reading a chapter from the Old Testament, he tries to count them, but his polling always breaks down in the middle, at the back rows; and then comes the thought, "Here are just one lady and her daughter, a girl, to be attended to, and this enormous piece of machinery is got up and maintained, for that simple end;" and the words of "the preacher" stand good to this hour: "When goods increase, they are increased that eat them: and what good is there to the owners thereof, saving the beholding of them with their eyes?"

These morning prayers of Lady Vernon's

are unusually long. There are the psalms of the day, and the chapters, and, in fact, a "service," which lasts about half an hour.

Mr. Penrhyn, who officiates, has had his breakfast an hour ago, in his own little office, and having talked and smirked a little, remits himself, in a fuss, to his work.

The breakfast-room still bears the ancient title of the "parlour," and is a spacious and cheery apartment, hung with festive tapestry, and opening into the dining-room. Here the little party of four assembled.

"It is eleven years, Mr. Coke, I was counting up last night, since I last saw you; and I believe you are one of the very oldest friends I have," said Miss Max. "Why don't you pay me a visit at Wybourne, when your excursions carry you to points so near as Hammerton and Dake's Hall? I heard of you there. I don't think it was kind."

"It is all your fault," said Lady Vernon. "He went to Dake's Hall to arrange settlements. Why don't you give him a reason to visit you?"

"Thank you very much, Lady Vernon," put in Mr. Coke, merrily.

"I think it is rather hard that an old woman should be put into Coventry because she can't find any one to marry her," replied Miss Max.

"A lady who might have married any one of a score of suitors, every one eligible, has no case to make," Mr. Coke said.

"I think Cousin Max is right. I think one's liberty is a great deal," remarked Maud. "Doctor Malkin said last night what I quite agree in, that it is better to marry never, than once too often."

"He says that a woman who marries once is a fool," said Maximilla Medwyn, "but a woman who marries twice is a criminal."

"Is not that rather violent doctrine?" Mr. Coke inquired.

"I think he only said, who marries within a short time after the death of her husband," said Maud; "and you recollect the curious stories he told us? There was a woman who would not allow him to bleed her husband, whose life, he said, would certainly have been saved by it, pretending too great a tenderness for him to allow it, and, in a few weeks after his death, she married a person who lived in the house; and there was another story of a woman who married immediately after her husband's death, without the slightest suspicion, who, ten years later, was convicted of having murdered him, by hammering a nail into his head while he was asleep."

"But, seriously, I'm a mere slave, and can never command an hour, except when I get to the Continent, and letters can't find me any longer. Doctor Malkin was here last night? I don't know the people—which was he?" said the attorney.

"He is a pale man, with a high nose, and dishevelled black whiskers, and good eyes," Miss Maud answered.

"My dear Maud, that doesn't describe him," interposed Miss Max. "In the first place he squints; next, he is bald, and he has a long upper-lip and a short chin, and an odious smile, that I think is both conceited and insincere, and you could fancy him just the doctor, if he did not like you, to bleed you to death, or poison you by mistake."

"My dear Maximilla, how can you?" said Lady Vernon, gravely, with a glow in both cheeks that comes when she is either angry or otherwise agitated. "My cousin, Mr. Coke, is not acquainted with Doctor Malkin. She does not know him; but I do; and I have the very highest opinion of him. I have great confidence in his skill, and still greater in his integrity. He is as conscientious a person as I ever met in my life. I know no one more entirely trustworthy than Doctor Malkin."

Lady Vernon spoke coldly after her wont, but she was evidently in earnest.

"Then his countenance does him great wrong," answered Miss Max, cheerfully, "that's all I say. It is quite true I don't know him, and I don't desire to know him."

And she sipped her tea.

"I assure you, Mr. Coke, I speak from knowledge; there is no one of whose good sense and truth I have a higher opinion. I wished you to understand that," said Lady Vernon. "And I have an almost equally high opinion of his skill. For the last fifteen years he has been attending, in every illness, in this house; and he has been so attentive and so successful, it would be impossible not to have the highest opinion of him as a physician."

Perhaps Mr. Coke thought it a little odd that Lady Vernon should make such a point of his believing this country doctor a paragon; and wondered why the peculiar flush by which she betrayed excitement should glow in her cheeks, and make her broad, cold eyes, fiery.

"Country doctors are often the ablest," he remarked, letting the subject drop softly; "they get to know the idiosyncrasies of their small circle of patients so thoroughly; and their dispensaries and the

rustic population furnish an immense field of observation and experience. Does Lord Verney come to-day?"

"Yes; I'm sorry he does, he is such a bore, poor man; I should have preferred his staying away," replied Lady Vernon, with plaintive disgust. "Barroden comes, and so does Mr. Hildering."

"And each, I think, brings his solicitor with him?" asked Mr. Coke.

"I wrote to them to do so, and I suppose they will," answered Lady Vernon. "Only Sir Harry Strafford doesn't come."

"I don't think we are likely to hit upon anything very new. I have gone over it so often, and I don't think anything has escaped us," ruminated Mr. Coke. "Is there a solicitor to represent Miss Maud Vernon?"

"No, I did not think it necessary. Does it strike you that this room is lighter than it was when you were last here?" inquired Lady Vernon, a little irrelevantly. "I'll show you how that happens."

And breakfast being by this time over, she rose and walked to the great window that looks towards the east. Mr. Coke, a little thoughtful, followed her mechanically.

"Two great lime-trees stood just there, where you see the grass a little yellow, and they were so shaken by the storm last year, that they were pronounced unsafe, and had to come down; they were beautiful trees, but the room is a great deal lighter."

"Yes," said Mr. Coke. "It is rather complicated, you see, and there might be a conflict of interests, and as the meeting is a little formal, it would have relieved me of a responsibility, but I'll do my best."

"I don't see that any conflict *can* arise, Mr. Coke," said Lady Vernon, coldly. "At all events, if she wishes to ascertain her rights and opportunities, or whatever they are, separately, there is nothing to prevent her. What we do to-day can't fetter her in any way, and I thought you were quite competent to protect us both. It would be rather early to anticipate her litigating with her mother. I should hope there won't be an opportunity."

"No," acquiesced Mr. Coke; "I should have preferred that arrangement; but I'll do my best. At what hour do you expect the trustees, Lady Vernon?"

"They will all be here by three o'clock, if they keep their appointments. I think Mr. Hildering will come at one; he said so."

Mr. Coke was thoughtful; and when Lady Vernon was gone, he looked over his note-book for a time, and raising his eyes a little after, he saw the slight figure of Miss Maximilla Medwyn walking up and down the long terrace before the house.

He went out and joined her.

STORIES OF THE ITALIAN PEASANTRY.

STORIES in prose and verse, which can be sung or recited by the fireside, are great favourites in Italy, especially among the peasant classes, and in the families of poor villagers and other tenants of the hills and valleys. In this category must be included shepherds and foresters, muleteers, charcoal-burners, and fishers; perhaps smugglers and brigands. The fishermen of the Northern Lakes are not sailors in the strict sense of the word; they are peasants, just as soldiers and volunteers are landsmen, whether they are employed to fight on battle-fields or on board ship. These (the lake peasantry) and the seafaring men of the coast are the great patrons of the "mercanti," or wandering pedlars, who carry their stores of merchandise into fishing villages and mountain districts, far away from the track of civilisation. Men of this sort supply the peasantry of Italy with all they want in the shape of books—that is, pamphlets—together with ribbons, lace, ear-rings, beads, rosaries, necklaces, and other articles of use and luxury, from a pair of slippers or a cravat, to a wedding-ring or a pack of cards. These lusty fellows sing at the fairs; they are often able to play the flute or the Spanish guitar, and their stock of stories is generally very extensive; albeit, now and then rather equivocal. Their collections of printed books generally consist of tracts, rudely stitched together, and printed on bad paper, detailing the Lives of the Saints, and the Adventures of Kings and Queens, and heroes of the olden time. These productions are duly authorised by the Church and patronised by the local priests, so that they obtain a rapid sale, and are read and understood in spite of the Latin (which no one understands) with which they are interlarded. It is only recently that the pedlars have taken to selling "profane" works along with the religious ones; for it is only recently that the taxes have been taken off literature, and the monopoly of education taken out of the hands of the priests; so that peasants may read what they like without

incurring the odium of their spiritual advisers, or the vengeance of Mother Church. It is chiefly on this account that the pedlars, as a class, are becoming less unique than they were in the days of the grand dukes and other petty rulers of Italy—their peddling tricks being more apparent now-a-days in driving heavy bargains, than in contributing to the enjoyment of their customers on the village green. Nay, it is said that they are becoming what is called "respectable," and are giving up the "comic" part of their business to clowns and buffoons. They sell more, and talk less, than formerly, selling a song off hand instead of singing it from house to house as of yore; and their great ambition is to become proprietors of a booth, preparatory to setting up a haberdasher's shop in some large village or market-town.

The stories of the peasantry are for the most part legendary, the names of their authors and the dates of their composition being, in many cases, unknown, even to collectors of ballads. They are printed and sewed together in a form somewhat similar to that of the Priest's Calendar and the Book of Mary, works which the peasantry, and other persons who profess to be well-informed, look upon as parts of the New Testament. They are sold at various prices averaging from two soldi (a penny) to a franc, and a franc and a half, the dearest books being bound in fancy covers, made of parchment, or coarse paper, and ornamented with woodcuts of an ambiguous character. Thus, a saint's portrait is often to be found attached to a story of brigands, and a standard-bearer, who appears to belong to the Austrian army, figures as a monk of the olden time, carrying the sacred flag or emblem of his convent.

The most popular of the stories of the peasantry is the novel or saga of the Reali di Francia, a work which is intimately connected with the Orlando Innamorato of Boyardo, and the still more famous Orlando Furioso of Ariosto, throwing much light on early manners, and the practice of knight-errantry. Its real title in English is the Royalties of France, but it might with equal propriety have been styled the Royalties of Spain, or the Kings and Queens of Fairyland. There is nothing in this book which might not have been written with equal truth about the kings and queens of England, or of any other part of Europe, and the Italian writer, who appears to have flourished at the end of the thirteenth or the beginning of the fourteenth century, might have transferred the French scenes of his story from France to Lombardy, and the Roman ones from Italy to Languedoc, without much confusion. All the names in the book are Italian, with the exception of those of Constantine, Charlemagne, and one or two others, and the whole treatment of the story is as unlike anything French or Provençal as can well be conceived. It is, in fact, a kind of epic in prose—an Italian Morte d'Arthur, in which the heroes and heroines of chivalry are brought together in a quaint, but highly poetical manner, with plenty of dash and fervour, but with little or no adherence to truth. Fabulous times are brought before the reader in a spirit of truth, and facts are described and commented upon in a spirit of fable. History and geography are ignored; battles are fought; kings are crowned; wives are conquered at the sword's point. It is astonishing how many events of a dramatic character are compressed into one small volume.

The Royalties of France begins with an account of the conversion of Constantine, and the instalment of the first pope in the Eternal City. The name of this prelate is Sylvester, not Peter, which would seem to clash with the generally-received account of the first wearer of the papal crown. But it is to be presumed that this book was written at a time when people knew or cared little about chronology, or the bonâ fide annals of the Church, or it is possible that the writer was a bit of a sceptic in these matters, and thought that one name was as good as another in cases where both were open to doubt. But it is very certain that a pope bearing the name of Sylvester is entered on the Roman calendar as existing at the time of Constantine, and that that pope or bishop of Rome, whether his actual name was Sylvester or not, was in some way connected with the conversion of the Roman emperor. The Sylvester of the calendar, dubbed a saint by one of the mediæval popes, was the thirty-third on the list of sovereign pontiffs (Peter the Apostle being counted as the first), and reigned—if the annals be correct—twenty-two years, namely from the year 314 to 336; at which time three Constantines—Constantine the Great, Constantine the Second, and Constantine the African—successively reigned over the Roman empire. All the early popes, down to the year 526, were saints; Boniface the Second (the fifty-fifth successor of St. Peter) being the first uncanonised pope. Some of these saints were godly men, who won their

honours after death by a life of usefulness and self-denial, but others were mere impostors, and some were mystical beings who worked miracles out of the tomb. San Sylvester, who figures in the Royalties of France, was especially famous for his miracle of the turnips. But the story must speak for itself.

There lived in the neighbourhood of Rome in the days of Constantine, a certain pastor of the Church named Sylvester. He had been persecuted for his religion, and took refuge on a hill called Mount Sirach, where there was a wood with a cavern in it. But he was driven away from thence, and fled to Aspromonte, accompanied by two of his followers. He lived here for several months in quiet and seclusion, during which time Constantine, who had been suffering from leprosy for twelve years, fell dangerously ill, and exhausted all the arts of his physicians. At last one of them, who had no children of his own, and was looked upon as a kind of genius, prescribed a bath of children's blood. Seven little girls, three years of age, who were born on the same day and at the same hour, were to be bled to death on the morning of their birthday in the emperor's palace. Their clothes were to be burnt at a sacred fire, and their bodies thrown into the Tiber, so that nothing should remain of their identity while the emperor was taking his bath. But the mothers of the little babes, though devoted to the emperor, and belonging for the most part to the lower classes of society (so that a bribe or blood-money might have been deemed acceptable), objected to the doctor's prescription, and began shrieking and tearing their hair in the ante-chamber. Hearing all this noise, the emperor came out of his bath-room, and inquired the cause of the disturbance.

"What!" he exclaimed, "are the mothers sorry? They are ungrateful wretches! Give them some more money and let them be gone." And so saying he disappeared into an inner room.

Soon afterwards a second disturbance was heard, louder than the first, and a second time the emperor came out of his bath-room.

"What is the matter now?" exclaimed Constantine, who though very ill (as has been stated) was able to walk about. "Are these women not contented yet? Do they want more money?"

"If it please your majesty," said one of the servants, trembling in every limb, "they won't take the money. They want their children back!"

"This is very extraordinary!" said Constantine with a kind of start; "well, I suppose I must yield to them, for I do not like to make people uncomfortable. Take the children away!" So the babes were restored to their parents, and Constantine went without his bath; but not for long. Strange stories were flying about concerning the cures effected by another doctor, greater than any that had yet appeared. Sylvester, the persecuted Christian, had been going about bathing people in what he called a bath of righteousness, and sprinkling them with holy water; and the fame of these things, after being reported in various parts of Christendom, reached the emperor's palace. Constantine sent for one of his barons, called Lucius Alboyne, and bade him ride to Aspromonte at the head of a thousand knights, and bring the hermit to Rome. The baron, setting out immediately, arrived at his journey's end early on the fourth day. When he and his troops arrived at the foot of the hill, Sylvester was at prayers, and thinking his time was come (for he looked forward to a martyr's death), he went out to meet Alboyne, who, leaving his troops in the valley, advanced with one attendant towards the sacred grove. He immediately made himself known to Sylvester, telling him that Constantine had sent for him.

Sylvester smiled. "I was prepared for this," said he, "for I have seen angels in my dreams, and I know by this sign that my time has come."

"I have a thousand of these angels down yonder," said the sturdy Alboyne, with a loud, mocking laugh. "They are waiting for us with drawn swords. Hasten, I pray you, for our Lord expects us."

"My Lord expects me, indeed," said the hermit, piously; "but I am glad of this!" He then asked Alboyne two favours; first, whether his followers, or fellow-Christians, might be allowed to stay on the hill and practise their religion as heretofore, and, secondly, whether he might be allowed to say mass before he went away. Both these favours were granted, and the two entering the garden, the holy man took a few turnip-seeds out of a sack, planted them in the earth, and made the sign of the cross above them with his right hand. He then performed mass—greatly to the astonishment of Alboyne, who had never seen anything of the kind before—and, lo! as he spoke, the turnips rose out of the ground and covered all the strips of earth over which the cross had been signed; so that

the heathen Roman soldier saw and believed at once, and asked to be baptised. When he had confessed his sins, and had received absolution for the same, the two set out together, and arrived in Rome on the fourth day, accompanied by the thousand knights. The travellers were at once admitted to a private audience.

"I hear you are a great doctor," said the emperor, very kindly, when he had dismissed Alboyne. "Where is this water that you recommend? How much does it cost? How many baths must I take a day?"

"The water that I recommend is the Water of Eternal Life," said the hermit, with a smile. "It costs nothing. One bath, if taken in a spirit of truth, is sufficient."

"But what is this water called?" asked the emperor, whose curiosity was now fairly roused; "my doctors have never said anything about it. I suppose it is some new invention?"

"It is older than the kingdoms of the earth," said the saint, lifting his eyes to heaven, "and it is called acqua santa, or the water of baptism."

"But will it cure me of my illness?" asked the emperor, still undecided.

"It will cure you and all mankind of all your illnesses, and prepare you and all of us for the life to come."

"Then give me some of this water in the name of charity, for I like your face, my father, and I am sure you are a good man."

The emperor bowed his head, and Sylvester sprinkled him with holy water, so that the sufferer was instantly cured of his leprosy, and became a Christian and a notable pillar of the Church, nay, its principal supporter. In a few years the whole of the Roman empire was converted to Christianity, and Sylvester was made bishop, and then pope of Rome.

Another very popular story in the Reali di Francia is the story of Rizzio or Rizzieri, the first of the Palladins, and Fegra-Albana, daughter of the King of Tunis. It is as pretty a piece of foolishness as one may wish to read, and has served as a model for many stories of a similar kind in France, Italy, and Spain, and also in Germany and England, where stories of knight-errantry were at one time very popular.

Two versions of the story exist: one short and sweet, like a nursery tale, or the song the fishers sing in the Bay of Naples; the other long-winded, and spun out into a kind of prose ballad, like the legends of the saints, with fifty episodes or sequels, each of which is, properly speaking, a separate story, though the names of the heroes and heroines are always the same. In the long version Rizzio is taken prisoner when he goes to Tunis, and is liberated by his jailer's daughter on condition that he marries her, which he is loth to do, as she has one eye larger than the other. He then enters the lists as the champion of Fegra-Albana, the king's daughter, and conquers all his foes; but the evil-eyed lady appears when least expected, and he is unable to obtain the hand of the beautiful princess, but is seized by treachery and shipped off to sea, where, after many strange adventures, he is sold to pirates. He escapes by an act of prowess and skill, worthy of Sindbad the Sailor and Monte Christo combined, and fights his way back to Africa, across Turkey and the Holy Land, making his appearance once more at the court of the King of Tunis, where, on being recognised by the faithful page Arcail, he is led to his mistress's bower, and there lodged and fed, till he is able to take part in another tournament. He gains a second victory, but Fegra-Albana, thinking he is killed, poisons herself, and the poor Palladin takes ship for Sicily, with Arcail for his man-at-arms, and gains more victories in field and bower, winning the love of another lady called Albana, but not Fegra, whom he marries and makes his queen; for he becomes a king of men. We have chosen the shorter and prettier of the two stories, that which brings the adventures of Rizzio and Albana to a happy climax, without putting them to unnecessary torture. Some authorities affirm that this is not the oldest version; but we have never felt particularly angry with those writers who put Chevy Chase and other ballads and stories of the black-letter age of English poesy into a modern garb, and we shall not grumble at the present handiwork, or wish it older than it is, whoever its writer may have been.

King Dannebrunne, sometimes called the Sultan of Babylon, after fighting several battles in Italy in unison with other kings and princes of the border-lands of Africa and Asia, pitched his tents before the city of Rome and laid siege to it with an immense army, but without success. During the armistice which followed the first attack, he sent messengers to different parts of the world—to Spain, to Egypt, to Arabia, to Persia, and to Turkey—an-

nouncing that several kings and other potentates had been killed in the various engagements, and, among others, Prince Arcaro, cousin of the King of Tunis. To Tunis were sent three ambassadors to report the prince's death, and to contract for a fresh supply of men and money in the event of war breaking out again. The king promised assistance, and the queen invited the ambassadors to her private room to obtain a detailed account of the battles, and to satisfy the curiosity of her maids of honour, which was at least as great as her own. When everything of a public nature had been described, the queen, bursting into tears, asked who killed Arcaro, saying she was sure he was some miserable assassin.

"No assassin, your majesty," said the principal ambassador, "but a brave young soldier, as beautiful as a girl, and with no beard on his chin. His name is Rizzio, the Palladin, and he is twenty years of age."

"So young, and yet so famous!" said the queen. "But who is he? I could kill him with my own hand. I hate him, for he slew Arcaro."

One of the maids of honour blushed deeply at these words, and yearned to hear more about the beautiful knight. This was Fegra-Albana, daughter of the queen, a girl between fifteen and sixteen years of age, who served at her mother's court. The ambassador proceeded with his story.

"Rizzio met Arcaro in single combat. Both were brave and true, and both were strong; but Rizzio was the stronger. He clove the prince's helm at one blow, and pierced him through the heart; but he refused the spoils of war, and left the corpse of that brave man to be honoured by his friends. Would to Heaven that this Rizzio were a Saracen, for I have seen him in the field, both before and after victory, and never have I seen a man to be compared with him!"

The queen frowned at these eulogies, but dismissed the ambassadors without giving vent to her displeasure, for she knew that the laws of chivalry required that men should speak well of their enemies. But she determined to avenge the death of Arcaro, and slew Rizzio many times in her dreams that night. Not so Fegra-Albana, whose youthful heart had become enamoured of this prodigy, and could not sleep for thinking of him. Next morning at an early hour she called her page Arcail, a little man with rosy cheeks, a year older than herself, and thus addressed him:

"Arcail, I have always loved you, and been kind to you, so I am sure you will do everything I wish. I want you to go to Rome, where the armies of King Dannebrunne are encamped, and find out Rizzio, who will be easily discovered, for he is the most beautiful man in that part of the world, and give him this letter, which I have written with my heart's blood, and tell him, good Arcail, that where the letter is blotted (and it is blotted in many places), tears of love and tenderness have fallen from the eyes of a king's daughter. And if you praise my eyes, it will be well, and still better will it be if you tell the whole truth, which is, that I am beautiful, though not worthy to be his bride; but of my love you cannot speak too much, for it is as deep as the sea, and reaches as far as Rome, where my hero lives, to which city, if you love me, Arcail, draw a passionate love-chain and draw my lover here, that I may be saved from early death."

The page swore to obey the lady's commands, and knelt down while she administered the oath, which was, that he would never reveal what he had that day heard, and that he would deliver the letter into no hands but those of Rizzio. After he had received money and passports from an officer of the palace, Fegra-Albana made him a present of a fine steed, and gave him one still finer for Rizzio, together with a shield and a garland of pearls, to be worn in the tilts and tournaments before the court. The page departed and took ship for Sicily, where he arrived in three weeks, after a stormy passage, and thence crossed the straits to the mainland, where he arrived in safety with the two horses, the shield, and the garland of pearls, reaching the camp of King Dannebrunne at the time of the full moon. When he found Rizzio he gave him the letter and the costly presents, and asked for food and a night's lodging, as he was tired out after his long journey.

Rizzio read the letter by the light of the moon, and was filled with wonder and delight at its contents, and turning to Arcail asked him, as he valued his own soul, to tell him all he knew about the Princess Albana: whether she was beautiful, how old she was, what were the principal characteristics of her beauty, and other matters more interesting to lovers than to quiet people like ourselves.

"There is only one sun in the sky," said Arcail, "and only one Albana on the earth. She is fairer than a flower and brighter than a star; she is as straight as a

palm-tree, and just tall enough to reach up to your heart if you stand side by side (as two such lovers ought), while she makes a bower for herself with her golden hair."

This reply satisfied Rizzio; that is to say, it made him very discontented, for he was glad to hear how beautiful his mistress was, but sorry that she lived so far away. He dismissed the page, and went into a lonely part of the camp, and read her letter over again, and when he came to the words, "I, Fegra-Albana, love my hero Rizzio. I have never seen him, but I will be true to him. I shall die if I see him not," he resolved to go to her. He dressed himself in his best armour, put on the shield and the garland of pearls which the king's daughter had sent to him, and bade Arcail saddle his horse. The page, who had refreshed himself with a few hours' sleep and a hearty supper, was glad to return to Africa to his dear mistress; so they set out immediately. The good Arab steeds ran fast, and the brave ship flew before the wind, and landed them in safety on the coast of Tunis. In a few hours they were at the king's palace, and in a few minutes more they were in the boudoir of the princess, who clapped her hands for joy (for she was a girl still) when she saw her lover. Then she remembered that she was a king's daughter, and drew herself up to her full height, and smiled upon the knight. This last, who had never seen anything so beautiful in all his life, unless it were his own gracious self reflected on his shield and in the brooks by the wayside, threw himself at her feet, and kneeling on one knee, exclaimed: "O, noble lady, deign to speak to me, for I am stricken down and conquered by your beauty, which is more potent than the swords of fifty enemies!" The lady smiled again, and bade him rise, and the two lovers, heedless of the presence of the page, heedless of the lateness of the hour, heedless of everything except their own happiness, began questioning each other about their former lives, and the end of it all was that Fegra-Albana became the affianced bride of Rizzio. In three days they were married, unbeknown to any one but the page and a Christian monk, who converted Arcail and Fegra-Albana to the true faith, and escaped with them to Italy, where the page, who had been secretly in love with the king's daughter, died of a broken heart. The others lived for many a year in peace and happiness, for Rizzio gave up fighting, and became a troubadour and the father of a large family of soldiers and poets.

These are the stories which the Italian peasant likes to read and listen to when he has done his work on the long summer evenings, or is leaning over the fire in winter, smoking his pipe. Some of the stories he loves to hear are stories of a later time—tales of every-day life, in which the miracles of the Madonna are the turning point of the plot, as in the story of the Gambler's Wife, whose soul was played for in a game at cards; or they are prose versions of Orlando Furioso, Morgante Maggiore, and other poems of chivalry done up in a modern dress to suit the tastes of villagers and lonely men lying on the outskirts of civilisation; men like the charcoal-burners of the Appenines, who live for nine months in the year without seeing a village, or hearing a church-bell. The peasant will tell you that these men are nearly all singers and story-tellers, and right glad is he when the winter is coming on (if he is a peasant of the right sort), to meet and drink a bout of wine with one of these demi-savages, certain beforehand that the wine will bring into notice some strange wild story of brigands and wolf-hunters. Sometimes the stories of his predilection are sung or chanted in a tremendous song two thousand lines in length, with a break in the middle of it for rest, or a glass of wine, or even for a dance, when a village feast or veglione is going on. At other times—as in the example above quoted—they are told in prose, with ad libitum songs to vary the monotony of the narrative: for songs are to the ear what pictures are to the eye, and stamp a subject on the memory as only songs and pictures can do when they are properly executed. And in these cases, especially in the south of Italy, where men's hearts are warmer, or more easily roused than in the northern provinces, one sometimes sees a crowd of peasants weeping hot tears about the wrongs of some imaginary lady, or a rough fellow threatening to beat the story-teller if he does not instantly let the hero out of prison! Few books afford more scope for this kind of sympathy than the Reali di Francia, and few books with which the present writer is acquainted are better adapted for the work they do: that of giving the peasants a taste for poetry and the fine arts. The Reali di Francia abounds in fit subjects for songs, and contains many charming episodes of love and war, stories of the Golden Age of history, which would do credit to any

library, and would not look very much out of place if they were bound up with a copy of the Morte d'Arthur.

FROM BORDEAUX TO PARIS, 1871.

THE DOVE OF FIFTEEN THOUSAND MESSAGES.

[Paris, Jan. 11.—The pigeon which arrived on Sunday brought in an immense mass of matter, which requires answer, and it has taken nearly two days to decipher all its messages. It brought in despatches for the Government, which when printed filled three or four columns of the newspapers; and in addition it has been the bearer of no less than fifteen thousand messages for private individuals. Never has a pigeon entered into a town bringing glad tidings to more people than the one which arrived on Sunday. If Paris needed to be comforted, in consequence of the psychological effects of the bombardment, the bird of good omen brought news which would far more than compensate for any depression produced by the Prussian shells. —Daily News.]

Laden with sorrow—laden with love,
Soar to thy home again, beautiful dove!
Like rain to the desert thy tidings shall be,
Bird of good omen, our hope is in thee!

Up in the sunny air, up and away,
Swift as the dawn that announces the day,
And safe as the dawn from the shafts of the foe
That lurks in his murderous myriads below.

Tidings and messages float on thy wing;
Some of them glad as the blooms of the spring,
Some of them sad as the leaves when they fall,
But fresh from the hearts that have prompted them all.

From lover to lover, from husband to wife;
Volumes, one-sentenced, of death or of life,
Or message of hope from brave mother to son,
To nerve his right arm for the fight to be won.

Soar with them, haste with them, beautiful bird,
Untiring, unerring, unseen, and unheard,
And stay not thy flight on the breeze or the blast,
Till Paris, the lovely, receives thee at last.

Oh! proud will she be, the sad Queen of the World,
Oppressed, not uncrowned, with her banner unfurled,
To learn that her France in defiance and scorn,
Is armed to avenge every wrong she has borne.

Speed with thy tidings, beautiful dove!
Carry to Paris our hope and our love,
Our will to be free whatsoever betide.
Bird of good omen, may God be thy guide!

IN THE FIELD WITH THE PRUSSIANS.

A SORTIE FROM METZ.

The 31st of August of the year 1870 was a fine, warm day. In and around Metz the sun shone brightly on hundreds of thousands of soldiers who were busily employed, for one of the greatest of military achievements was quickly and surely working its way to fulfilment. The Prussians and their allies were in crowds in all the villages surrounding Metz, and their fore-posts and outposts stretched as far as they dared toward the awful forts.

It must not be supposed that the French host was kept within the walls of the town of Metz. The Germans had to keep a very respectful distance. Any one who has a good map of Metz will be able to trace the following villages, beginning at the south side of Metz by the Moselle bank, and working round eastward: Ars-sur-Moselle, Augny, Marly, Mercy le Haut, Ars Laquenery, Olgy, Nouilly, Vany, and Malroy. These were the villages occupied by the German troops. Nearer than this they dared not come, and thus the French had in some places a run of four or five miles from their fortress. From the village of Malroy, which lies north of Metz, and which is situated on the Moselle, right round the west side of Metz, there were no villages in which the Germans could find shelter consistent with their duty of keeping the French from breaking out of the city, so that something like one hundred thousand men who had had to bivouac under the open sky, during the time they had been near Metz, would have to keep that up till the place was either taken or relieved. The prospect was not an enjoyable one for the poor fellows, for stories were abroad that Metz had provisions for six months, and thus the campaign would last far into winter.

The position of Metz is not difficult to understand. It lies at the foot of two very high hills, which are surmounted by the strong forts before mentioned, and are dotted here and there by villages which, lying under the protection of the fort guns, were safe from German attack. The approaches to Metz on the other three sides are through level ground, and consist of long straight chaussées, with rows of trees on either side. Now, as these roads were sure to play an important feature in sorties, the Germans had strongly barricaded them with cut-down trees, which were placed with the branches towards Metz and their trunks towards the besiegers. On either side of these barricades, as well as behind them, the Prussians had tremendously strong earthworks; not mere hastily formed rifle-pits, but strong, well-formed earthworks, behind which hundreds of men might find shelter, and leisurely fire when occasion required.

The object in making these preparations was twofold—one of course being that the French, in making a sortie, must first conquer these obstacles before proceeding to more desperate work; the other, that in order to gain time for massing troops, such obstacles as cut-down trees, with their entanglement of branches, take a long time to get out of the way, particularly if they

have to be cleared away during an incessant shower of bullets, or perhaps of shells. Besides these earthworks and cut-down trees, every available house was turned into a little fortress; loopholed walls were everywhere visible as one approached the advanced Prussian posts.

For many days all the villagers in the neighbourhood were collected and made to work at rifle-pits, and in cutting down their trees; it was dreadful work for them, and the Prussians had to apply the flats of their swords pretty freely to make these Frenchmen do such distasteful work. People who are vanquished in war are not allowed to have any feelings, or if they have any they are not allowed to show them, so that many a proud Frenchman was obliged to pocket his rage and work for his enemies.

I was at a village near Metz on the day in question; some Prussian officers and I had had a bathe in the blue Moselle, from the boats of a pontoon bridge, in the very early morning, and as the mists from the plain rose and the sun came out, I set out for a walk to a hill overlooking the valley through which the river flowed. On reaching the summit of the hill I looked down, and to the right of where I was standing was one of the most lovely scenes I have ever witnessed. The beautiful little river was dancing on in the sunlight through green meadows, dotted by clumps of beautiful trees; by one of its banks a herd of oxen were lazily chewing the cud, while on the other a large flock of sheep were quietly grazing; it was as perfect a picture as I have ever seen. I scarcely altered my position, and looked down on my left; the contrast was perfectly appalling. Instead of green meadows there was a marshy swamp, without a tree to be seen; on and around this dreary waste, baggage waggons and market-tenders' carts swarmed; further on I could see men engaged in buying dead horses. The Moselle, muddied by the hoofs of some trooper's horse, carried on its bosom the carcass of a dead animal. From a bend of the river, right across the muddy plain, stretched a long mound, and behind the mound was a correspondingly long trench half filled with water, in which stood a number of Prussians on watch. At the next bend of the river another mound and trench stretched across the plain, and the intervening space between the two trenches was green. Behind this mound one caught sight of the red caps of the French, and every now and then the cruel, cold gleam of the bright sword-bayonets. After looking at this wonderful contrast between peace and war for some time, I came down from the hill into the village of Ars-sur-Moselle. In this wretched little place, through which thousands of Prussian soldiers streamed every day to one or other of the banks of the Moselle, I in vain looked for something to eat. Soldiers filled every house and building from garret to cellar, and neither apparently for love nor money was any food to be obtained. I wandered some way out of the village across the Moselle bridge, as at that time I had no settled employment, and was only waiting for what a sortie might bring me in the way of work. I had not gone very far when I came upon a Prussian bivouac by the wayside. The bivouac, as usual surrounded by a perfect Slough of Despond, was built of boughs; two or three fires were burning brightly, although it was mid-day, and some soldiers were boiling some potatoes that the French had sown, little expecting at the time they did so that the Prussians would gather in their crops. Two officers were sitting on chairs smoking cigars, with their feet towards a fire; one of these was a big, burly, good-natured looking individual, with a red face, the other was a spare, puny, bumptious, little fellow, with a turned-up nose, and two little tufts of red hair on either side of his chin.

Now I was getting, or rather had got, ravenously hungry, and I was determined, come what might, to get something to eat. So I went up to the two at the fire, and, putting the tips of the fingers of my left hand to my left temple, and bending my body forwards with two little jerks, I said: "Gentlemen, I have the honour; my name is ——." Thereupon the big officer rose from his seat, and went through the same gesticulations as I had done, and pronounced his name to be Von Kummerling Schmetterbau. His companion also went through the same contortions, and said his name was Grummingfeld Kissinger. This he croaked into my ear in such a deep voice that it almost made me laugh; it was so unlike the little body from which it came.

After this formal greeting I asked if they could direct me to the whereabouts of any market-tender's cart, as I was nothing more nor less than starving. The good-natured looking man said they had not seen their market-tender since that morning, but that he had got some bread and sausage; if I would accept it, he would think it a great honour. I said I thought it a great kindness on his part, but that

I could not think of taking it, knowing, as I did, that it must sometimes be very difficult for him to get a meal.

"We have our regular rations," he said; "so I must beg of you to take it. Who knows but that in a few days, or even hours, you may find me helpless and wounded on a field of battle; and if I refused to give you a little assistance now, do you think I could bear to accept your relief then? All those whom one can help in time of war one ought to help, for God knows there are enough sufferers already, without adding to the number by individual deeds of selfishness or cruelty."

I bowed my thanks and acquiescence of what he had said, and I soon found that my hunger disappeared before a huge hunch of black bread and sausage. To wash this rather indigestible food down, Von Kummerling Schmetterbau produced some rare good wine. "Requisition," thought I, as I tasted it; and I came to the conclusion that campaigning was not half so bad as people sometimes made out. After I had finished my repast, I asked the big burly lieutenant when he thought it likely that Marshal Bazaine would make a sortie.

"That's an impossibility for me to say correctly," was his answer; "but every day that he delays it makes it harder for him to break through, and easier for us, when he is out, to drive him back again."

"Do you think he has any means of communication with the outer world?"

"Yes; I fancy he has," said Von Schmetterbau. "They say there is a subterranean telegraph between Metz and Paris. Besides that, there is some private signalling going on."

I begged he would explain how that was possible.

"To give you an example of how it is done, I will give you an account of what I myself found going on," he said. "The other night my regiment had outpost duty on the other side of Ars. After seeing my men were all on the alert, after one of my rounds, I took a short stroll towards Ars. I had a cigar, and was enjoying it very much, when, at a window in the first house of the village, I noticed a red light. At first I took this to be a red flower painted on a lamp-glass, and I did not at first take much notice of it; but it suddenly shifted while I was looking on, and two red lights appeared, these, in their turn, being superseded by a red and a green one. I threw away my cigar, told a picket of men to surround the house, and took two poor innocent peasants prisoners. Of course they had never done anything wrong in their lives; but, as they could give no satisfactory reason for having dozens of lamp-glasses of various hues, their innocent assurances did not prevent their being taken to the nearest wood, and shot like dogs. No doubt exists in my mind that these worthies had for weeks been signalling to Metz before they were found out, and these kind of spies are the most dangerous sort there are, and often cause the deaths of thousands through such bare information as can be given by these lamp-glasses."

"Holloa!" said the little lieutenant, "there's a gun!"

We waited but a moment, and then we could distinctly hear, thud-thud, thud-thud, and then the sound of volley after volley, following in such quick succession as to remind me of the surging of the sea. The lieutenants hastily rose; Von Schmetterbau shook my hand, saying, "I may need you sooner than I thought." I answered, "I hope not," and in a few minutes the bivouac fires were deserted, and the little company had set out to join its regiment at the appointed rallying post. It was curious to see the rueful faces of some of the soldiers who had to turn the almost cooked potatoes on to the earth, in order that their cooking utensils should not be left behind. The hot black little cans had all to be strapped on to the top of their knapsacks, just as if they had been bright and clean. The alacrity was wonderful; the Prussian officers have no trouble in collecting their men, as they seem instinctively to know exactly what is required of them, and long before the alarming trumpet's blast, they roll up their great-coats, and prepare themselves for the signal, so that, when it does come, the officers have only to say, "Shoulder knapsacks and arms! Vorwärts!" and they fall into ranks as they proceed.

I now looked about to find some means of conveyance to take me to the battle-field. I was not long in finding what I wanted, in the shape of a waggon with surgical stores, which was coming from Pange, and going near the battle-field. A young German surgeon was sitting on some mattresses, and he gladly gave me a seat by his side.

"Whereabouts is the fighting?" said I, producing a map I had with me.

"I don't exactly know," answered my fellow-voyager; "but it's on this side the Moselle. That Bazaine has broken out. I have orders to go to St. Barbe. If you want to go under fire, you can get out any-

where you like between here and there. And if you walk towards Metz you will soon get more than you want. I was in the fight of the 14th of August, by Pange," continued he, "and I never wish to go under fire again. I prayed more in five minutes than I did all my life before."

"Is it so very terrific?" I asked, in order to hear what description he would give of it.

"Terrific!" he ejaculated; "I should rather think it is. Listen to that."

We both held our breath, and in spite of the grinding of the cart-wheels along the road, and the clatter of the horses' hoofs, we could distinctly hear something besides the loud booming of the guns.

"That surging noise is the hiss of bullets," said he; "and when one is not really in the action, but has only to take a passive part in it, I can tell you it's enough to turn one's hair white, that terrific hiss, let alone what one sees from the effect of one bursting shell. It's all very well for the combatants to rush into the fire; they have several feelings which sustain them; esprit de corps is perhaps the strongest. Then they long for revenge, and are to a certain extent blind to the noises and scenes around them; but the non-combatant, let him be doctor or peasant, who is mixed up with crashing battalions, will not forget his feelings till the day of his death."

As the cart proceeded, the din of battle became louder and louder. It was about seven in the evening, and the first cannon had been heard at four in the afternoon. The battle raged more furiously than ever; there was a heavy cloud of smoke extending several thousand yards, which was perceptibly increasing in size, and by it the tide of battle seemed rolling against the Prussians.

"Vany seems to be about the place where the fighting is hottest," said my companion. "If you'll take my advice, you will not go that way. From what I can see and hear, it strikes me Bazaine is well out of Metz, and if so there will be terrible work to-morrow again."

"Here come the ambulances," said our driver.

We looked in the direction indicated, and eight cumbersome waggons were seen coming almost at right angles to us. I said good-bye to the young surgeon, thanked him for his company and help on the road he had given me, and went up to the ambulance waggons. I touched my hat to the head surgeon, told him who I was, and asked to be permitted to follow his ambulance.

"Certainly," was his answer. "Would that there were hundreds more like you coming, for there won't be much sleep for us for the next three or four days. It seems to be a heavy cannonade."

The ambulance waggons belonged to the First Army Corps.

"What corps are engaged?" I asked a Prussian surgeon, who was bestriding one of the most miserable specimens of the equine species that I have ever beheld.

"I can't say," replied the surgeon. "Of course, our corps (the First) is there, and, I think, the Seventh; but I don't know what others."

The ambulances were now fast approaching the conflict, and as we neared, columns of ammunition waggons and regiments pressing on to the fight were everywhere visible.

"We must not go nearer than this," said the head doctor. "Halt!" The waggons drew up.

Night was now casting its sombre shadows over the thick, sulphurous clouds. I could distinctly see the streaks of fire and hear the dull thud, thud, which rolled along the leaden atmosphere unceasingly. Just as the darkness closed in, the fires of death ceased, and stillness reigned once more, broken only by the sigh of pain, the death rattle in some brave fellow's throat, or the convulsive kick of some half-slaughtered charger. Through the hours of this short summer night the dying had to comfort themselves, for such was the utter confusion into which the Germans had been thrown, that a Prussian colonel told me no man knew where he stood, and that Bazaine, with the whole of his forces, had broken through. I was proceeding to see if it were possible to get a little nearer, when I was arrested by the gruff challenge of a German sentry, "Wer da?" I went up to him, but before going many steps he bade me halt, and tell him who I was. I told him. To my joy, I found it was one of the soldiers from Von Kummerling Schmetterbau's bivouac; he knew my voice. I asked him where the lieutenants were.

"Einer ist schon Todt," he said.

"Which of them is dead?" I asked.

"Der Kleiner," was his answer.

"Poor little Kissinger," I thought; "this afternoon full of conceit, and so soon to be cut down." My short reverie was broken by some one calling to the sentry to know whether he was on the look-out.

"Ya, Herr Lieutenant," was his answer; "I stand like a wall."

The lieutenant passed on, the rain began to fall, and I felt wretchedly cold.

"Did you see Lieutenant Kissinger shot?" I asked.

"Yes, sir," answered the sentry. "I am his servant, and was sent back to help him, but I found he was dead; bullet through forehead, sir; no hope."

"Can I get to the wounded, to help them?" I asked.

"Well, sir," said the man, "orders are to let no ambulance go on the battle-field, and no one is to strike a light, not so much as to light a pipe; so you would not be able to do much, sir. But, if you would like to speak to Lieutenant Schmetterbau, you will find him rolled up in his great-coat asleep, behind a cut-down tree, to my right."

I thanked the civil sentry, and made my way to the tree indicated. I soon picked out the huge form of the lieutenant, thinking, as I did so, that bullets choose strange billets, and that it was wonderful that the little lieutenant's forehead should have received a bullet, while his ponderous companion's broad chest had escaped. It was marvellous how he slept, still within chassepot range in all probability.

"Ah," he said, awaking "how have you found me?"

"By the sentry, against whom I happened to stumble," was my reply. "I want to go and help the wounded," I said. "How do you advise me to set about it? Which way are the French?"

He raised his hand and waved it very nearly in a circle round his head, and said: "That way."

"How can you sleep?" I said. "We must be in a frightfully perilous position."

"So we are," was his answer. "There are eighty thousand French out, if I mistake not. Good-night, my dear comrade," he said. "I must get a little more sleep. Nature refuses to be polite."

I left him for ever; the next day he, too, slept the sleep of death, and a little mound bearing a wooden cross is all that marks the last resting-place of the good-natured Prussian lieutenant.

WILL O' THE WISP AND HIS RELATIONS.

People are not yet tired of asking for the real meaning of Will o' the Wisp. Time after time the question is raised whether Will has a real existence, or is only a phantom; whether a natural phenomenon, a creation of the fancy, or a relic of superstition from dark ages. Will spells his name in many ways: Will o' the Wisp, Will a' Wisp, Will with a Wisp, Dank Will; sometimes the sex is changed, and we have Kitty with a Wisp; sometimes it becomes Jack, in the form of Jack o' Lantern, Jack in the Lantern, Jack with the Lantern, Hob o' Lantern, Hobby Lantern, and even Peg a' Lantern; then there is Kit o' the Candlestick, and Gill or Gyl Burnt Tail, and Friar's Lantern. The German Irrwisch appears to have the same meaning; but the Italian Luccida belongs to the insect kind, in companionship with the glowworm, the fire-fly, and the lantern-fly. Will and Jack are brothers, perhaps twins, perhaps one identity with many names.

Concerning the luminous appearances which have given rise to the popular notion about Will o' the Wisp and Jack o' Lantern, it may be well to present a few descriptions by persons who have narrated what they saw, or thought they saw, but who rather sought for an explanation than fashioned one for themselves. A letter to Baxter, from a Mr. Davis, noticed a nocturnal light, which was believed in by the Welsh in those days, and was called the Tan-we, or Tan-wed. It was described as a light "appearing in the lower region of the air, straight and long, not much unlike a glaive; it shoots directly and level, as who should say I'll hit, but far more slowly than falling stars. It lighteneth all the air and ground where it passeth, and lasteth three or four miles or more, for aught is known; because no man seeth the rising or beginning of it; and when it falls to the ground it sparkleth and lighteth all about." This relates to a district where the corpse-candle was very generally believed in, and is, indeed, still believed in to a considerable extent. A short time before death, a light was to be seen proceeding from the house of a sick person, and pursuing its way towards the churchyard; it was supposed to presage death. Grose gave very exact details, as if all the causes and effects had been ascertained with scientific precision. "If a little candle is seen, of a pale bluish colour, then follows the corpse of some infant; if a larger one, then the corpse of some one come to age. If there be seen two, three, or more of different sizes, some big, some small, then shall so many corpses pass together, and of such ages or degrees. If two candles come from different places, and be seen to meet, the corpses will do the same; and if any of them be seen to turn aside, through some by-path leading to the church, the follow-

ing corpse will be forced to take exactly the same way." Most of these so-called corpse-candles appear in graveyards and swamps, and are, in all probability, identical with Will and Jack now to be more particularly noticed.

Several years ago a gentleman was travelling in the south of Ireland one night, when, being a few miles from Killarney, he saw a light flickering about, vanishing at intervals, and as often reappearing. His car-driver and he stopped some time, and observed it steadily. The light varied from fifty to a hundred yards distance. The air was very still, the time about nine o'clock on a September evening. The peasantry often saw the light in various pieces of marshy ground.

A resident near Cambridge has described a light which he saw in a fenny bog on the Newmarket road, of which many varieties had been seen by him in Norfolk and Suffolk. The appearance was always so peculiar, and the movements so fantastic, that it seemed to him strange for the rustics to liken the light to a lantern. The Gentleman's Magazine, about forty years ago, said: "In the parish of St. Austell, in Cornwall, there is a singular phenomenon. It is the appearance of light near the turnpike-road at Hill Head, about three quarters of a mile west of the town. In the summer season it is rarely to be seen; but in the winter, particularly in the months of November and December, scarcely a dark night passes in which it is not visible. It appears of a yellow hue, and seems to resemble a small flame. It is generally stationary; and when it moves it wanders but little from its primitive spot, sometimes mounting upwards, and then descending to the earth. As it has frequented this spot from time immemorial, it is now rendered so familiar, that it almost ceases to excite attention." What the Cornish people thought about it we are not told. Lights of the same kind have been seen dancing over a moor near Torrington, in Devonshire, and over undrained land in North Lincolnshire.

A Warrington newspaper, not very long ago, gave a circumstantial account of a Will o' the Wisp, useful on account of its clearness. On going into his garden about ten o'clock on a February night, an inhabitant of a country district in Lancashire saw a light in a field, which floated down the wind for about a hundred yards, and then disappeared. He mounted on the garden fence to have a better outlook, and watched for a quarter of an hour. During that time eleven distinct lights rose in the same field, and floated down the wind various distances, from forty to a hundred and fifty yards, before disappearing. They seemed to him to shine with the brilliancy of the planet Jupiter; but this mode of comparison is of course not very trustworthy. Besides these, there were many smaller lights continually rising, and floating ten or twenty yards before disappearing. The field in which these appearances were presented was a hollow one, lying on the banks of a brook. Still more detailed was an account of the Will o' the Wisp, or, rather, a whole family of Wills, given by Mr. Allies, in 1839. On the 30th of December, at Upton-on-Severn, he was told that the weather was such as denoted a probable approach of these lights; there was a white frost in early morn, then the sun rose behind a mantle of very red and beautifully stratified clouds, and in the evening rain fell heavily. On the following evening the phenomenon appeared in some meadows near the high road. "Sometimes it was only like a flash in the pan on the ground; at other times it rose up several feet, then fell to the earth and became extinguished; and many times it proceeded horizontally for fifty or a hundred yards with an undulating motion, like the flight of the laughing woodpecker, and about as rapid; and once or twice it proceeded with considerable rapidity in a straight line upon or close to the ground. The light of these ignes fatui was very clear and strong, much bluer than that of a candle, and very like that of an electric spark. Three or four of them looked larger, and as bright as the star Sirius. Of course they look dim when seen in ground fogs, but there was not any fog on the night in question; there was, however, a muddy closeness in the atmosphere, and at the same time a considerable breeze from the south-west. Those lights which shot horizontally invariably proceeded before the wind towards the north-east." Two nights afterwards, Mr. Allies not only witnessed a recurrence of the phenomenon, but at about eight o'clock two very beautiful lights rose together about fifty yards apart; one ascended several yards, and then fell to the ground in the shape of an arch, and vanished; the other proceeded in a horizontal direction for fifty yards, but vanished before it could be approached more closely.

A gentleman of Bath, about two years ago, was riding over Mere Down after dark on a December evening, when he

suddenly saw five lights glimmer forth on his horse's head. One was on each ear, about the size of the flame of a small taper, of a bluish colour; two of the others, smaller in size, were on the right eyebrow, and the remaining one on the left. They glimmered something like glowworms, or as if the parts had been rubbed with phosphorus. The night was dark, and a steady rain was falling; nevertheless, while the lights lasted, which was during a quarter of an hour's riding, the light given was sufficient to render visible the buckles on the bridle. The rider went on steadily, trying to make out what the glimmering could mean, when it disappeared as suddenly as it came. The horse had been taken from the stable, and had travelled no great distance. The animal exhibited no symptoms of unusual perspiration; but the rider, remembering that there had been thunder and lightning in the afternoon, was disposed to think that something in the atmosphere had produced the phenomenon.

Whether called Ignis Fatuus, Jack o' Lantern, or Will o' the Wisp, there can be no doubt that these nocturnal lights are real phenomena, susceptible of a scientific explanation, when all the facts are collected and compared. Of course, illusions, more or less ludicrous, are now and then mixed up in the matter. On some occasions, real lanterns of humble make have been mistaken for these nocturnal sprites under odd circumstances. About twenty years ago, the household of a country residence, within sight of a low swampy tract of meadow, were startled one September evening, and the superstitious among them frightened, by the appearance of strange, waving, wandering lights, which continued for several hours. The motion of these lights was very eccentric, and they traversed the district in every direction, up and down, backwards and forwards. All night this continued. As the day approached, the lights vanished, leaving the observers to account as well as they could for the phenomena. At length some of them, bolder than the rest, having examined the ground by daylight, and discovered neither sinking bog nor any other pitfall that would be hazardous after dark, resolved to ascertain the real nature and origin of the lights. They went on the following night, noiselessly and secretly, and followed up the dancing lights till they came close to them. When, lo! the mysterious visitors proved to be lanterns tied by collars to the necks of small well-trained setters, in the service of poachers who, with nets, were thus pursuing their avocation—catching almost every head of game on the estate.

The first modes of accounting for the lights were naturally more or less tinged with superstition. Being often near bogs and quagmires, the lights acquired the character of snares or decoys to lead travellers into danger. According to an old provincial legend, St. Peter was once travelling on horseback; his horse lost a shoe; a smith named Will put on a new one: and St. Peter was so pleased with the manner in which the work was done, that he offered to grant any favour the smith might ask. Will, who was getting advanced in years, begged that he might be made young again. It was done, and he spent a very rollicking and rakish life. One result of this was, that he became Will o' the Wisp, going about the world to lure travellers to their death. The Wisp is understood to mean an ignited twist of straws, in many a passage not quite so startling as this about St. Peter. The name Ignis Fatuus, or foolish fire, denotes a very similar idea, that of a light which leads foolish people astray. Gay says

> How Will o' Wisp misleads night-fearing clowns
> O'er hills, and sinking bogs, and pathless downs.

There are still peasants in Norfolk who call the Wills and the Jacks Lantern-men, and who believe that if any one goes with a real lighted lantern near them, the lantern-men will become enraged, knock him down, and break his lantern. There is also a phrase in use among the same peasants, of being "led-will'd," applied to any one who has lost his way after dark, and cannot find a gate or stile with which he is usually familiar enough; the remedy has at any rate the merit of simplicity—to turn the left stocking wrong side out, and renew the search.

In the seventeenth century, many writers had got a clue to a scientific explanation in a certain degree in conformity with the notions then in vogue concerning essences, vapours, spirits, and the like. Referring to lights visible in and near houses rather than to those in open swamps and graveyards, a still earlier philosopher said: "Such fyres are seene in moyst kitchens, sinckes, or guttours, and where the orfall of beastes killed are thrown." He was on the right track, if he had pursued the matter. In the time of the Charleses, one writer described the Will o' the Wisp, or Jack o' Lantern, as "a certain viscous substance, reflecting light in the dark, evaporated out of a fat earth, and flying in the air. It

commonly haunts churchyards and fens, because it is begotten out of fatness; it flies about rivers, hedges, &c., because in these places there is a certain flux of air." Another put forth his scientific explanation thus: "It is caused by a great and well-compacted exhalation, and being kindled, it stands in the ayre, and by the man's motion the ayre is moved, and the fire by the ayre, and so goes before or follows a man." Milton put a little science into his lines, when he treated the Ignis Fatuus as

> A wandering form,
> Compact of unctuous vapours which the night
> Condenses, and the cold environs round,
> Kindled through agitation to a flame.

In the time of George the Second, there was a pamphlet published with the title "Natural and Philosophical Conjectures on the Ignis Fatuus, or Jack in the Lanthorn: endeavouring to prove that the light so called proceeds from some flying insect, and not from a fixed vapour, as generally believed; with a descriptive and curious figure of the Indian lanthorn-fly, a nocturnal insect which carries a light in dark nights, equal to that of our Will with a Whisp." If this philosopher meant his observations to apply beyond the phenomenon of the glowworm, he was not so near the truth as some of his predecessors.

It is by this time pretty well ascertained, that most of these appearances, which consist of a glow without a flame, are due to phosphorescence. The strange substance phosphorus exists in all animal organisms; and when the organism is decomposed after death, the phosphorus makes its presence visible in the way so familiar to those who have ever seen stale fish in a dark cupboard. But when the phosphorus enters into new combination with hydrogen and other gases, or when those gases form inflammable mixtures without phosphorus, spontaneous combustion is likely to arise, and small flames to be produced. If decaying animal substance yields more phosphorus than decaying vegetables, the latter are a more abundant source of inflammable gases; and hence the fact that bogs, marshes, morasses, swamps, moors, damp meadows, ditch-sides, &c., are the places in which the flickering nocturnal lights are mostly to be seen produced by the combustion of the gases liberated from half-decomposed roots, stems, branches, and leaves. Particular states of the atmosphere hasten decomposition, and the lights are more abundant at such times. On the banks of the Trent, where mysterious Will often played his pranks some years ago, he has now almost disappeared, owing to the conversion of dank marshes into well-drained cornland. In the instance noticed in the Warrington newspaper, it was remembered that several cows had been buried on the spot during the cattle plague of 1866; they had died of disease, and an inference may fairly be drawn that gases produced by putrefaction were concerned in the production of the flickering flames.

There is also another agency which has to be noticed, electricity, a power that flies about all terrestrial things in a way not yet so well explained as chemical combustion and ignition. Electricity does, undoubtedly, produce luminosity, more or less vivid, and under varying conditions. When we rub the furry coat of a cat backwards in the dark, a luminous effect is well known to be produced; and similar instances are numerous. There is a phenomenon known as St. Helen's fire, gradually corrupted into St. Helme's fire, and St. Elmo's fire; consisting of lights seen on the tips of soldiers' lances, the topmasts of ships, the spires of churches, and other pointed objects. Whenever they appear the air is in a peculiar electrical condition; and they are now reckoned among electrical phenomena, depending on the same principle as the light which streams off from points connected with an electrical machine. Some of the Spanish sailors call such a light a Cuerpo Santo, or holy body: a name corrupted into Corpusanse and even Complaisance. The lights on the tips of horses' ears, noticed in a former paragraph, are probably due to some electrical condition of the horse at the time, in a peculiar state of the air. Many of the old writers puzzled themselves greatly to find a rational cause for the lights. One of them said: "Experience witnesseth that the fyre do cleave manye times to the heads and eares of beastes and shoulders of men rydinge and going on foote. For the exhalations dispersed by the ayre cleave to the eares of horses and garments of men, which of the lightnesse doe ascend, and by the heate kindled. Also this is often caused where men and other beastes by a vehement and swift motion wax very hote, that the sweate, fattie and clammye, is sent forth, which kindling, yeldeth this fyre." Another, speaking rather of the appearances presented at sea, reasoned thus: "When clammy vapours, arising from the salt water and ugly slime, hover over the sea, they, by their motion in the winds and hot blasts, are often fired; these impressions will oftentimes cleave to

the masts and ropes of ships, by reason of their clamminess and glutinous substance." This singular theory is further developed, to render it available for weather prophecy. One of these nocturnal lights, he adds, portends a coming storm, two a calm: "They denote that the exhalation is divided, which is very thick; and so the thick matter of the tempest is dissolved and scattered abroad, by the same cause that the flame is divided; therefore no violent storm can arise, but rather a calm is promised." Another writer brought in sulphur to his aid: "When this meteor" (a light seen at a masthead, &c.) "is seen, it is an argument that the tempest which it accompanied was caused by a sulphureous spirit, rarefying and violently moving the clouds. For the cause of the fire is a sulphureous and bituminous matter, driven downwards by the impetuous motion of the air, and kindled by much agitation." A singular muddle of phrases and notions.

Thomson had the Will o' the Wisp in his thoughts when he spoke of the benighted traveller beset by an evil genius:

> Struck from the root of slimy marshes, blue,
> The wild-fire scatters round, or, gather'd, trails
> A length of flame deceitful o'er the moss;
> Whither decoyed by the fantastic blaze,
> Now lost and now recover'd, he sinks abashed.

But he put a better interpretation upon this other kind of light:

> Sent by the better Genius of the night,
> Innoxious, gleaming on the horse's mane.

The phosphorescence of living insects, the phosphorescence of decaying animal substance, the spontaneous combustion of gases from decaying vegetable substance, and electrical action, are all concerned with Will and Jack and their family.

MISS PONSONBY'S COMPANION.

In Twelve Chapters.

CHAPTER XI. MERCY'S LAST TRIUMPH.

When Lilly awoke from her troubled sleep, and a dream that seemed one entanglement of hideous terrors, she started up with a scream, for Mercy was standing by the sofa, watching her. Mercy looked very pale and serious, and was pretending to wipe away her tears with the corner of her apron.

"Miss Dampier," she said, "I came to wake you. I am afraid that missus is worse. I can't get her to speak; she seems in a sort of torpor. Oh, Miss Dampier, I think that I see the signs of death, just as they came to poor Mrs. Baldock!"

Lilly leaped out of bed, and pulled back the curtains; it was a cold grey morning, and Miss Ponsonby lay there apparently in a death-sleep. Lilly listened; the breathing was scarcely audible. What had happened in the night seemed like a dreadful dream now, as she lifted the thin white hand that lay on the bed-clothes, and felt the wrist for the scarcely perceptible pulse.

"You gave her the medicine I see, miss," said Mercy, gliding round to the side of the bed where the table was, and seeing the fatal bottle was gone.

"I watched her closely, Mercy," said Lilly, not looking round, for fear of betraying herself, "and I attended to everything. Oh, I should never have forgiven myself if I had not. Dear, dear aunt. Oh, how I wish Mr. Tresham were here. We must send for him at once. Send Susan, Mercy."

"Dear, dear missus, she will be taken, I know she will," whined Mercy. "I heard the death-watch three times last night, just as I did the very night before Mrs. Baldock went to heaven. You can't hear her breathe now."

At that moment a sharp ring at the bell startled them both. Lilly ran and looked out.

"It is Mr. Tresham," she cried. "Thank God he has come, and we may still save her. Run, Mercy, and ask him up at once."

The next moment Tresham was in the room, pressing Lilly by the hand. That first glance he gave Lilly was full of love and confidence.

"This is strange," said the doctor. "I left her better yesterday, decidedly better, pulse firmer, breathing stronger. She was certainly agitated about the robbery, but naturally, for the superintendent tells me another ten-pound note has been stolen in some mysterious way. Let me see. Draw back the curtains, Mercy. I want to rouse her, and see the expression of her eyes—it is very strange, this alteration."

Mercy drew the curtain and pulled up the venetian blind. At the sound Miss Ponsonby moved, groaned feebly, and muttered one or two words in a drowsy voice. Tresham sat on the side of the bed, felt her pulse, trying in vain to rouse her, and lifted both eyelids.

"She had the medicine at daybreak, Lilly, and the medicine last night?"

"Mercy gave her the medicine last night," said Lilly; "since that I have attended to her. Oh, Frank, save her, save her!"

Tresham looked very serious as he turned to Mercy, wrote something on a card, and

said: "You must go as fast as you can to my surgery, and ask Lyddy for the two bottles I have written for on this card."

Mercy did not seem to show so much alacrity as she might have done.

"Oh, sir," she said, "I know the spirit of my poor missus will depart while I'm away from her. Let Susan go. I would not have dear missus die, and I not near her. Oh dear, oh dear! I shall soon follow her, I know I shall."

"You must go yourself, and at once," said Tresham, sternly. "Her life may depend upon it. Susan is only a child; she might make some mistake."

Spurred by this injunction, Mercy, whimpering, took the card and left. The moment the door closed upon her, Tresham flew to where Lilly knelt by the bedside.

"Lilly," he said, "some one has been giving her laudanum. Who, who is it? There is something in your manner that tells me something has happened. Is it that wicked wretch?"

Then Lilly rose and told all the events of the night—the softly-opened door, the gliding figure, the change of the medicines—she shuddered and nearly fainted as she told it, and all the horrible moments of the night passed again before her. Coupling the fact, she knew not how, with the robbery, the house seemed to her haunted by some evil spirit that infected it with mystery, terror, and crime.

"The bottle; give it me," said Frank. "There has been some dreadful wickedness working here."

Lilly drew the bottle from under her pillow. Frank took it to the light, smelt and tasted it.

"Good God!" he said; "as I suspected; chlorodyne! The superintendent told me that wretched woman, Mercy, had been buying chlorodyne in the town, but I laughed at his suspicions. If your aunt had drank this, in her state of health, she would now, most probably, be dead, and the guilt, if it had been detected, would have rested upon you. The woman must have given her some also last night. Were you here when she gave the draught?"

"Yes. When you left, and I came upstairs, I found Mercy pouring something from a bottle by the window; she stopped when she saw me, and gave me the glass to give aunt, going down-stairs immediately for the kettle or something she pretended to want."

"The wretch! That was to make you the person who gave it."

"When I gave the medicine into her hand, aunt looked and said it was much more than a dose, so I poured back all but a wineglassful."

"Lilly, then that saved her; for the woman had only put a little chlorodyne in it, and you probably disturbed her as she was mixing it. She had no doubt calculated that, if found out, the suspicion would fall on you, who had been so lately accused by your aunt. The woman was no doubt greedy for her legacy. Wretch!"

"Oh! You have saved me, Frank! You have saved her!" said Lilly.

Frank pressed her in his arms and kissed away her tears.

"Your aunt's life is still in danger, Lilly," he said. "The antidotes I shall use are sufficient to restore her in a short time; but I must watch her through the night, as we do not know how the prostration may tell on her in her enfeebled and susceptible state."

When Mercy returned with the required medicines, Frank administered the antidotes. As Tresham was about to take leave of Lilly in the hall, he suddenly stopped at the parlour door, and, to Mercy's surprise, requested a few words with her. The three entered the room, and Tresham closed the door.

"Mercy," he said, "do you know from what your mistress is now suffering?"

Mercy turned up her eyes and said, "Mrs. Baldock's doctor called it a fit."

"Such fits," said Tresham, sternly, as he produced the bottle of chlorodyne that Lilly had given him, "are sometimes the result of wrong medicines. Do you buy much of this sort of medicine? Is this a favourite remedy of yours?"

Mercy turned livid, but said sharply:

"The medicine you sent missus has had, and none else."

"Was this the bottle you filled last night with what I sent?"

"Miss Dampier's been telling lies of me, I see," said Mercy, with a sudden desperate outburst of spite. "She has been dreaming. I changed no medicine. She is more likely to change missus's medicine than I am." Mercy was determined to brazen it out, and began to guess what had happened. "She's a pretty one to talk of me; ask her about herself. Who stole the ten-pound note? Who was found with the letter in her hand, and half the stolen note inside it?"

Lilly burst into tears, and clung to Frank's arm. Mercy continued:

"She to tell lies of me! as if I'd put anything in dear missus's medicine. Who is

she to run me down? Let me hear what things she does say—all of it."

"You were seen last night coming into the room and changing the medicine I left for that which I have here. All this violence is thrown away. I can send you to prison any moment for attempting to murder."

"Well, if I did come in" (all the varnish of sanctimoniousness was gone now), "well, if I did come in, I was only seeing if the medicine was poured out ready. I am not answerable for your sending wrong medicines. And you" (here she turned like a tigress on Lilly), "shall I tell of you now, and let your sweetheart know who it was let the young man in yesterday morning, before we were all up, and tell him who was talking together several minutes in whispers in the parlour? Ask her. See, she can't deny it."

Tresham looked at Lilly; she turned from him and made no reply.

"Lilly, this is not so? This cannot be so. I would not believe an angel that told me that!"

But Lilly was still silent.

Then Mercy laughed bitterly, and Tresham turned and said:

"Once more, Lilly, I ask you if this is true?"

She made no reply. Frank turned from her and said:

"Lilly can you explain this, for it cuts my heart in two?"

She looked up with pure and radiant eyes, and said, "Frank, yes I can; but not now. Do trust in me, Frank. Will you? Do you?"

Frank was silent for a moment. Then he kissed Lilly, and said firmly, in a clear voice, "I DO!"

"Lovers and fools will believe anything," was Mercy's sneering comment on this noble trustfulness. "Hope you mayn't repent it. All I say is, curse her! and let her be cursed for telling lies to take away my character. Am I to blame because a wrong medicine's sent and missus has a fit? Pretty doings. Ugh!"

CHAPTER XII. THE THIEF IS CAUGHT.

THAT night Frank Tresham had resolved to closely watch his patient. At the turn of the night if this death-like torpor did not begin to yield to the remedies, the danger was imminent indeed. He and Dandy were the only living creatures awake in the old house. Even the elms had rocked themselves to sleep after their late trouble, and of the stolid bay-trees not a leaf stirred.

The door between the two rooms was open. Frank sat by the pleasant fire in the parlour, thinking of Lilly. A warm and cheery light played upon the bureau, and Dandy, coiled up on the hearth-rug, dreamt of his old enemies, and occasionally moved uneasily, with a faint cry, that indicated the pugnacious and aggressive character of his dreams. The silence was so intense that when a jet of gas burst out of a bituminous lump of coal, like a fire fairy, and blazed away with a noisy and brilliant whiff of momentary flame, the effect was quite startling, and made the silence the next moment seem all the deeper. A little later, the sharp tapping of a rose-branch at the window roused Frank, so that, with his mind full of what had recently happened in that house, he rose, drew aside the curtains, and looked out into the pitchy darkness. Then, laughing to himself for indulging in such foolish imaginations, Tresham resumed his seat in the low-backed Queen Anne chair, that was Miss Ponsonby's throne, and presently he went to see his patient. He had carefully locked the other door of the bedroom, yet he could not help feeling a sort of half-expectation, half-dread, that, as he turned the corner of the great curtained wall of bed, he might come full butt on that shrouded figure, which Lilly had seen the night before bent on so mysterious and suspicious an errand. Yet this, too, was foolish, he at once felt, as he turned the corner, and shaded the night-light which he carried, to look at his sleeping patient, and to feel her pulse, which was just a beat or two faster. Even then, as the floor-planks creaked under his foot, and seemed replied to by a faint jar of the locked door that opened on the head of the stairs, he could not help listening for a moment to see if his quick sense could catch even the faintest sound above or below, that might indicate the approach or retreat of that invisible thief, whose two visits had brought such misery on that house. But there came no sound but the tick, tock, tick, tock of the old clock upon the stairs.

Tresham went back and sat by the fire, thinking of all that had happened since that eventful evening when he looked through the parlour window and saw Lilly sitting in the old high-backed chair, pensively reading a letter by the fire-light. Dear Lilly! that picture was indelibly printed on his memory. What letter was that? Who was it from? No, he trod down all base distrust—crushed it as he would have crushed a snake. Next came

the loss of the first ten pounds — so he reflected — stolen from the very room where he was sitting—the room that only Mercy, Lilly, and Susan had entered that day. Then came the superintendent's dark hints the night Gumboge got drunk and tapped at the window; but policemen were always mysterious, whether they knew anything or nothing. Mercy buying the chlorodyne, too; that was strange; yet it did not seem to have anything to do with the robbery. The loss of the second note was even more remarkable, because it had been taken in full daylight, when the door between the rooms was open, when the parlour door was locked, and when Miss Ponsonby was actually awake in the next room. But had she been awake? The thief must be some one acquainted with every movement in the house, and every one's ways. The strange story, as Tresham traced it, grew darker and darker from the suspicions of the superintendent about Lilly's letters to the mysterious person at Gypsum, and Miss Ponsonby's finding the half-note in Lilly's last letter. Then the interview in the early morning before any one was down. What could that mean? Was that man the thief, and had he obtained some mysterious hold over Lilly? No, that was wild and impossible. Entangled in these doubts and fears, like Victor Hugo's hero in the poisonous feelers of the sea-monster, Tresham still kept his faith firm in Lilly, and saw her pale, beautiful face gleaming calm and radiant above all this dark nightmare struggle. Worn out by watching—for he had been out all day—gradually sleep fell upon the young doctor. The book he had taken up to beguile the time slipped from his hand upon the carpet, rousing Dandy for just a moment, and a loose bit of silver-paper, covering a steel engraving in the first page, fell out as the book dropped.

Dandy opened one sleepy eye as the silver-paper swirled down by the leg of the table, then rose, wound himself up still more cosily, and slumbered.

The scenery of Tresham's dream was Indian. He was searching for Lilly through the ruined vaults and long stone passages of some Hindoo temple, whose priests had seized her for sacrifice. It was a troubled, terrible dream. Some of the passages through which he passed seemed so low that he could hardly stand upright in them, so narrow that he could hardly force himself through, with the little earthen lamp which he carried. In some of the passages he could see snakes glide into their holes as the light fell on them, and everywhere there was a ceaseless whirr, like the sound of a factory, from the countless flesh-coloured bats that clouded the air. In some of the rooms the roofs had fallen in, and he had to force and hew his way through great thorny bushes, full of threatening reptiles, and over masses of shattered pillars and broken pediments; as he toiled over these obstacles, he suddenly, to his unspeakable agony, heard Lilly screaming to him for help, as priests, whom he could not see, dragged her to their funeral pile; then came a clash of gongs and beating drums, announcing the coming sacrifice. Which way to go he knew not; the sound rose on all sides, and her voice grew more and more distant. He could hear some wild beast at that moment stirring in the covert through which he struggled. The thought of death at that moment, when he needed angels' wings and an angel's power to spring to Lilly's help, awoke him with a pang of agony.

In an instant he was wide awake; a faint rustling caught his ear; he did not rise, but looked round; he could hardly believe his senses; it was an enormous rat, quietly dragging towards the old bureau the piece of silver-paper which had dropped from the book that had fallen on the floor.

Moving with the utmost caution, not to alarm the animal, Tresham put out his foot and aroused Dandy, who instantly comprehending the situation, darted up wide awake, and, with a screaming yelp, sprang on his formidable antagonist, who at once dropped the silver-paper, turned and joined battle; but before Tresham could spring to Dandy's rescue, Dandy had been bitten off, and the rat had darted towards the bureau, slipped under it, and disappeared. In a moment Tresham, exerting all his strength, dragged back the ponderous bureau, calming Dandy, who was furious at the sudden discovery that the whole civilised world was teeming with rats, and, with a candle, examined the wainscoting with as much eager curiosity as Dandy himself. Yes, there at a corner of the dusty skirting-board near the window was an unmistakable rat-hole. It was not difficult, aided by the poker, to wrench back a portion of this, and trace the direction the hole took behind the boarding. Forcing away a foot of this somewhat roughly—for the importance of the strange discovery seemed to warrant the violence—Tresham, lying flat on the floor, thrust in his hand and discovered a rat's nest, in which he could feel some

fragments of gnawed wood. He then wrenched back more of the boarding, so as to get his hand still deeper in the passage to a further hole, from whence with the tongs he could draw out something soft, that seemed the lining of the final apartment of the rats, and, to his extreme delight, at last extracted a ten-pound note, scratched into strips, and the bitten fragments of another. Here, then, had been the real thief; here at last was the solution of the mystery. There could be no further doubt, Lilly's innocence was proved. Dandy, racing about his master as he examined the recovered notes, barked in insane triumph.

What happy yet what leaden-footed hours those seemed till daybreak came! Frank could look out and see in the grey light the two spinster elms nodding kindly good-morning to him, and the bay-trees shaking as in sombre laughter at the strange and happy conclusion of poor Lilly's troubles. A little robin came to the window where he stood, and, from a branch of honeysuckle, sang a little hymn of rejoicing as if at the happiness restored. Perhaps it was Lilly's good angel in disguise, Frank thought. Unable any longer to contain the secret, he rang the bell furiously, and then finding that means of communication not instantly successful, pulled at the up-stairs bell. Presently Susan came, frightened out of her wits, to announce that Mercy could nowhere be found. It was afterwards discovered that that worthy, soon after the doors were shut for the night, had tied up one or two things in a bundle, and, taking off her shoes, had unbolted a back door, and fled into the night, whither, no one in Crampton, not even Superintendent Humphries, ever could discover.

Need we describe the joyful meeting of Frank and Lilly, the recapitulation of the strange event of that night, the wonder and the delight, as they stood together at Miss Ponsonby's bedside, and told that amiable person all, to her infinite astonishment? She was still weak and ill, but the deadly torpor was quite removed.

"And now, Frank, you are dying to know, aren't you," said Lilly, when they went back to the parlour and stood by the window in the fresh sunlight, "who the mysterious person of Gypsum was who Mercy saw me talking to, and with whom I corresponded? Shall I tell you now?"

"Not unless you like, Lilly dear," said Frank. "You will tell me some day, I know. No, I don't want to know. Something good and kind led you to keep the secret from me, I am sure. I could not be jealous, because I knew you had given me your heart."

"I'm afraid I should have been jealous," said Lilly; "but no, I shouldn't, because I love you entirely. That man was a half-brother of mine, Frank, dear, who ran away to Australia, and, as was supposed, died there. A month ago, however, he wrote to me for money, from Gypsum, where he was earning what he could by riding steeplechases and betting. I was afraid to tell aunt, because she would not have let me write to him, or send him money, poor fellow, which he was always asking for; and that is all the mystery."

One evening, two weeks after that strange discovery, Miss Ponsonby, sitting at a work-table by the old bureau (taking, in fact, dummy at a snug game of whist), expressed openly her decided satisfaction at, and approval of, Frank and Lilly's speedy union, and more than hinted that all her property would revert to the young doctor who had saved her life, and the dear niece who had tended her so lovingly.

Thanks to Tresham's care, Miss Ponsonby slowly recovered, and, six weeks after the discovery of the unpunished thief, Crampton bells broke into a clamour of rejoicing to announce the marriage of a certain young doctor with Miss Ponsonby's pretty companion. George, grimly smiling, was present at the wedding, with the young woman from Big Bookham on his arm, and Lyddy herself flung an old shoe with all her heart at her young master's carriage as it left Miss Ponsonby's house for the railway station, while little Lizzy and Susan, radiant with delight at the whole ceremonial, and with arms round each other's waists, cried, as Lyddy afterward colloquially expressed it, "like bitterns."

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THE ROSE AND THE KEY.

CHAPTER XX. LADY VERNON'S EXCURSIONS.

WHEN he overtook that cheerful sentry, he said: "Can you tell me where I should be likely to find Miss Vernon? I have a word to say to her."

"Lady Vernon sent for her a few minutes ago, but she said she would not keep her long," said Miss Max; "I told her I should walk up and down here till she came."

Mr. Coke walked beside her without saying a word, till they had completed a walk to the end, and back again.

"Lady Vernon is as handsome as ever," he remarked, on a sudden. "Since I last saw her there is really no change that I can see."

"But that is scarcely a year ago," answered Miss Max.

"More than four," replied Mr. Coke, smiling.

"You mean to say you have not seen Barbara for four years!" exclaimed Miss Max, stopping short and turning towards him.

"I come whenever I'm sent for," said Mr. Coke, with a laugh. "But though I don't see her very often, I very often hear from her, and very clear and clever letters she writes upon business, I can tell you."

"But didn't you know she is in town for some time, every year of her life?"

"I had not an idea. We hear from her generally about once a fortnight. But I should very often have liked a few minutes' talk with her. Those little points of vivâ voce explanation are very useful in a long correspondence. And so she is every year at Grosvenor-square?"

"I think you had better not say a word about it to Lady Vernon," said Miss Max.

"Oh! of course not. I leave that to her. But I think it is a mistake, not giving us half an hour when she comes." Thus Mr. Coke, swinging his stick a little, and looking over the top of the terrace balustrades, across the court, and ponds, and peacocks, and swans, and the close-shorn sward stained with the solemn shadows of the trees, down the perspective of foliage, to the mighty piers and great carved urns of the iron gates, and the gables and twisted chimneys of the gate-house.

"Yes, that would be only natural, and her not doing so puzzles me more and more," replied Maximilla Medwyn; "you are such an old friend, and know everything about the affairs of this family so intimately, that I'll tell you; but you are not to let it go further, for it is plain she does not want it talked about; and it is simply that which makes me very curious."

"I've learned by this time to hold my tongue and to keep secrets, and I venture to say, this is a very harmless one," laughed Mr. Coke.

"Well, now, listen—what a time Maud is! Once a year—I think about July or August—my handsome cousin, Lady Vernon, is taken with what my maid terms a fit of the fidgets. She takes her maid, but never Maud with her, mind—never. Maud has never come out. I don't think she has been six times in London in her life. That is not right, you know; but that is a different matter. Lady Vernon and her maid go up to Grosvenor-square, where the house is all locked up and uncarpeted, all except a room or two, and where there is no one to receive them but an old housekeeper and a housemaid. She tells old Mr. Foljambe, the vicar, that it is to consult a London physician. No great testimony, I think, to the surpassing skill of Doctor Malkin. But, I fancy, it

is not about any such thing she goes to town, for her stay in Grosvenor-square never outlasts a day or two. Her fidgets continue. She leaves her maid there, and goes alone, I believe, from one watering-place to another."

"Without her maid, you say?"

"Yes, without her maid."

"And how do they know she goes to watering-places?"

"They never know where she is going. The only clue is, that now and then she sends a note of directions to her maid, in London, or to the house-steward, or the housekeeper, down here; and these indicate her capricious and feverish changes of place, which you'll allow contrast oddly with the stillness and monotony of her life, when she is at home. Then, after six weeks or so spent in this mysterious way, she appears again, suddenly, at her town house, tells her maid that she is better, and so they return here. It is very whimsical, isn't it? Can you understand it?"

"Restlessness, and perhaps a longing for a little holiday," he answered. "She has, I may say, a very peculiar position in what they call the religious world; and the correspondence she directs, and even conducts with her own hand, is very large. Altogether, I think, she makes her life too laborious."

"Well, as you and she, and you and I, are all old friends, I don't mind telling you that I don't think that's it. I don't believe a word of it. There is more in it than that; but *what* I can't divine; and, indeed, it does not trouble me much; if Barbara would only do what she ought about Maud, I should be very well satisfied. But she has never been presented, nor been to town for a single season, and Lady Vernon has never taken her out, and I don't think has any idea of doing so. Of course, you'll say that, with all her advantages, it can't matter much. But there can be no advantage in people's saying that she has lived all her life like a recluse; and I think there is always a disadvantage in despising what is usual. And really, Mr. Coke, as a confidential friend, I think you might very well say a word about it."

He smiled, and shook his head.

"All that sort of thing is quite out of my line. But I think with you, it doesn't much matter; for she's the greatest heiress in England; and she is so beautiful, and—here's Miss Vernon at last."

As Maud came down the steps she looked to the right and left, and seeing Miss Max, smiled and nodded, and quickened her approach.

Mr. Coke advanced a step or two to meet her, with his business looks on.

"I have been wishing to say a word if you will allow me. I think it would be advisable that you should be represented at the conference we are to hold to-day, to prevent any course being determined on that might embarrass your interests under the will; and if you authorise me to do so, I will watch them for you this afternoon; and, in any case, I'll mention that a solicitor should be retained for you, as the instrument is unusually complicated, and you will be of age in a very little time."

"I don't understand these things, Mr. Coke, but whatever mamma and you think right, I shall be very much obliged to you to do. What a charming day it is! I hope you are not to be shut up all day. When you were last here it was winter, and you will hardly know the place now; you ought to see Rymmel's Hoe to-day, it is looking quite beautiful," said Miss Maud Vernon.

"I'm off, I'm afraid, to town this evening," he answered; "a thousand thanks. I must now go in and see Lady Vernon, if she's at leisure."

So with a smile that quickly disappeared, he turned and walked up the steps.

CHAPTER XXI. THE CONFERENCE.

Of this muster of trustees, Miss Maud Vernon gave this account in one of her long letters to her friend, Miss Mary Mainard.

"On Tuesday we had a little parliament of trustees, opened with great solemnity by mamma. She was aided by an attorney, a Mr. Coke, who says that your humble servant ought also to have been furnished with an adviser of the same profession. Old Lord Verney came similarly attended; and Lord Barroden also brought his attorney; Mr. Hildering, a great man in 'the City,' I am told, dispensed with that assistance, and, I suppose, relied on his native roguery. Still there was an imposing court of attorneys, sitting as assessors with the more dignified members of the assembly. Sir Harry Strafford, who is also a trustee named in grandpapa's will, did not attend. As all these were men of importance twenty years ago, when they were named in his will, you may suppose what a juvenile air the assembly presented.

"Mamma did not choose that I should attend, telling me that I should be sent for,

if required; and I had begun to hope that my assistance had been unanimously dispensed with, when a servant came to tell me that mamma wished to see me in the library. Thither I repaired, and found her presiding at her cabinet.

"Lord Verney and Mr. Hildering were a little red, and I fancy had been snubbing one another, for Mr. Coke mentioned, afterwards, that they are members of the same boards in London, and fight like 'cat and dog' whenever they meet. Mamma looked, as usual, serene, and old Lord Barroden was, I am sure, asleep, for he was the only gentleman of the company who did not rise to receive me. There were printed copies of grandpapa's will, one of which was given to me; so I took a chair beside mamma, and listened while they talked in a language which I did not the least understand, about what they called real and personal reversions, contingent remainders, and vested remainders, and fees and tails, and more unintelligible names and things than I could remember or reckon up in an hour.

"They all seemed to treat mamma with great deference; not complimentary, but real; and I remarked that they said very little across the table to one another; but whenever they had anything to ask or to say, they looked to her, and she seemed to understand everything about it, better than any one else in the room, and Mr. Coke told me, afterwards, she is one of the best lawyers he ever met, and he explained a great deal that I did not then understand.

"The conference lasted nearly three hours! You can't imagine anything so dull; and I came away just as wise as I went there, except, perhaps, that I had learned a little patience.

"The Rose and the Key, which, as you know, figure on our shield, were talked of a good deal, and are mentioned very often in the will, as indicating the families which are named particularly. Old Lord Barroden woke up at this part of the conversation, and talked a great deal of heraldry, whether good or bad I can't say; and then, as they were still very garrulous upon crests, supporters, shields, chevrons, and all the rest, mamma led the way to the state dining-room. I don't know why, we never dine there now; I think it about the prettiest room in the house—I don't think you saw it, when you were with us. It has great stone shields let into the wall all round, and ours, over the mantelpiece. They are all carved in relief, and painted and gilded, according to heraldry; and you can't think how stately and brilliant it looks. Old Mr. Puntles, who is our antiquary in this part of the world, says that it was an old English custom, when a house was being built, for the owner to place the arms of the principal families in the county, thus, round the state dining-room, by way of a compliment to them, and now I saw what I never observed before, that in every second one, or oftener, our device, the Rose and the Key, is quartered in the corner. The rose, red; and the key, gold; *gules* and *or*, they call them, on a field azure: you see how learned I have grown."

Then the writer ran away to subjects more likely to amuse her and her friend.

Mr. Coke did not stay to dinner. He took his leave nearly three hours before that solemn meal. As he came down-stairs from his room he encountered Miss Vernon, who was going to dress.

"You are going to hear the bishop's sermon, and see the statue unveiled?" he inquired, stopping before her in the gallery.

"Yes, Miss Medwyn and I; mamma has a headache, and says she can't come," she replied.

"I'm afraid our long consultation tired her; I'm sure it tired you, and I don't think you can have understood half we said. If you have five minutes, I'll describe to you now, just in outline, the leading provisions of your grandfather's will."

"I have more than five minutes, I'm sure," she answered; but not so much interested as Mr. Coke thought she might have been.

Young ladies are so much in the habit of being taken care of by others, that they can without much magnanimity dispense with the drudgery of taking care of themselves. They like whole bones as well as we do, but the vicious habit of being taken care of prevails, and what woman is quite capable of taking care of herself over a crossing?

"You must have for life, if you outlive your mother, Lady Vernon, at least ten thousand pounds a year, and you may have ultimately one hundred and fifty thousand pounds a year, in land, and a great deal of money beside—I don't think there is any lady of your age, in England, with such magnificent prospects. If Lady Vernon should marry, and have a son, the estates will go to him charged with ten thousand a year for you. If she should not marry, then, on her death, they go to you. If

you marry, then your mother's power over the whole property will be very limited indeed. If neither you nor she should marry, then on your death the estates will go to some one to be appointed among certain families who are connected with yours, and who have a right to quarter the family device of the Rose and the Key."

"I've heard that before. Mr. Tintern of the Grange, near this, represents one of those families, I've been told?"

"Yes, and in that event, you or Lady Vernon, whichever survives, would have the right to appoint."

"I'm afraid, Mr. Coke, I have not mamma's talent for business. I should very soon be lost in the labyrinth."

"But, so far, you do understand?"

"Yes, I think I do."

"Well, there are also specific provisions in the event of your marriage, Miss Vernon, and perhaps, until you are furnished with a legal adviser, the best thing I can do for you will be to send you as short and simple an abstract of the will and its codicils as I can make out. The plan of the will is, to keep the estates together, and to favour certain families, out of whom, in the event of your both dying unmarried, an heir is to be appointed. If your mother marries, which I rather conjecture is by no means unlikely——"

He looked very archly as he said this, and some complication of feeling made the young lady, though she smiled, turn pale.

"Do you really mean——?" began Miss Maud.

"I only say conjecture, mind, but I am generally a tolerably good conjuror, and we shall see. But, if Lady Vernon should marry," he continued, "her power over the estates is increased very considerably, but your reversion—I mean, your right of succession—cannot be affected by any event but the birth of a son. The provisions respecting the personal property—that is money, jewels, pictures, everything but the estates—are very stringent also, and follow very nearly the dispositions respecting the real estate. There is an unusual provision, also, with respect to all savings and accumulations, which may be made either by your mother, Lady Vernon, or by you, and they are to be carried to the account of the personal estate under the trusts; and very searching powers for the discovery of any such are vested in the trustees, and they are obliged from time to time to exercise them: and any such sum or sums, no matter how invested, are to be carried to the credit of the trustees to the uses of the will. So you see, it is a very potent instrument."

"I'm sure it is," said the young lady, with a disappointing cheerfulness.

"Well, I'll do my best; I'll send you an abstract; and, is that the church-bell I hear?" he asked, glancing through the open window.

"Yes, we hear it very distinctly," said she.

"Oh, then you'll be going immediately." And again he took his leave.

CHAPTER XXII. IN ROYDON CHURCH.

The bell from the church tower sounds sweetly over town and field: and the sober-minded folk, who people the quaint streets of Roydon, answer that solemn invitation very kindly.

In this evening sun, as the parishioners troop slowly towards the church-gate, near the village tree, sad Mrs. Foljambe, hard of hearing, the gay Captain Bamme, and the new curate, the Reverend Michael Doody, accidentally encounter.

Mrs. Foljambe stops to receive their greetings. The level sunbeam shows all the tiny perplexity of wrinkles on her narrow forehead with a clear illumination.

"I'm going to the church to witness the ceremonial," shouts the captain, with his best smile.

She turns with a little start.

"No wonder she's a bit hard of hearing, captain, if that's the way ye've been talking at her this ten years," suggests Mr. Doody, in a tone to her inaudible.

"We have been sending up some china and cut-glass to the vestry-room, for the bishop's toilet-table," says Mrs. Foljambe, and her head droops, and her sad eyes look dreamily on the road, as if she were thinking of passing the rest of the evening there.

"The bell has only ten minutes more to ring, ma'am," says the curate, who is growing uneasy.

"It is a nice evening," observes Mrs. Foljambe, drearily.

"Quite so," says the captain, waving his hand agreeably towards the firmament. "Although we have sun, it's cool."

"Your son's at school?" repeats good Mrs. Foljambe, to let him know that she had heard him distinctly.

"Oh, oh, oh, that's rich!" ejaculates the curate, exploding.

The captain smiles, and darts a malignant glance at the Reverend Michael

Doody, but does not choose to bawl a correction in the street.

So they resume their walk towards the church. The sun is drawing towards the horizon; it is six o'clock. The tombstones cast shadows eastward on the grass, and the people, as they troop upward toward the porch, throw their moving shadows likewise along the green mantle of the dead, and the grey churchyard wall catches them perpendicularly, by the heads and shoulders, and exhibits in that yellow light the silhouettes of worthy townsmen and their wives, and sharp outlines of hats and bonnets, gliding onward, to the music of the holy bell, to hear the good old bishop preach.

The good bishop is robing in the vestry-room. The vicar does the honours with profound suavity, and the curate assists with a military sense of subordination and immense gravity.

A note awaits the bishop, in charge of the clerk, from Lady Vernon, pleading her headache, and begging the good prelate to come to Roydon Hall, and if his arrangements about the Church Missions meeting will not permit that, at least that on his way back to the palace he will give her a day or two, or as much longer a time as he can. One of her grenadiers in blue and gold and cockades waits at the vestry-door for an answer, looking superciliously over the headstones. But the bishop cannot accept these hospitable proffers.

In due time the statue is unveiled. In white marble, the image of a slender man, of some forty years or upward, with a noble pensive face, and broad fine forehead, his head a little inclined, stands forth, one hand laid lightly on an open book, the other raised, in pleading or in blessing. It is what we don't often see, a graceful, striking, and pathetic monumental image.

Dead two-and-twenty years, there were many present who remembered that energetic, charitable, and eloquent vicar well. And all who knew him adjusted themselves to listen, with earnest ears, to the words which were to fall from the lips of the good old prelate, who preached, after so long an interval, as it were the funeral sermon of his gifted friend.

The Vernon family have a grand, old-fashioned, square pew in the aisle; Maud Vernon and Miss Max Medwyn sit there now, and the bishop's chaplain has been, by special invitation, elevated to its carpeted floor, and sits on its crimson cushion, and performs his religious exercises on a level at least twelve inches higher than the rest of the congregation in the aisle.

Under the angle of the organ-loft, at each side, is a narrow entrance. And above that, at the right, is a straight stone arch, separating the loft from the side gallery, and looking diagonally across the aisle. Behind this, going back deep into the shade, is a narrow seat, with a door opened by a latch-key from the winding tower-stairs. Here you may sit between stone walls that are panelled with oak, hearing and seeing, and yourself unobserved. In old times, perhaps, it was the private observatory of some ecclesiastical dignitary or visitor, who looked in when he pleased, secretly, to see that mass was sung, and all things done decently and in order.

To those who look up, the arch seems empty, and nothing but darkness in the cavity behind it. But a human being in perturbation and bitterness of soul is there. It is hard for her to follow the benedictions of the psalm, to which the congregation read the responses that echo through the old church walls. In the corner of the deep and dark cell she occupies, there stands, as it were, an evil spirit, and there ripples in and fills her ears, with ebb and flow, the vengeful swell, but too familiar to her soul, of another psalm—a psalm of curses. Ever and anon, as if she would shake something from her ears, she shakes her head, saying:

"Is he not dead and gone? 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.' Let him alone. Don't think of him."

But the gall returns to her heart, and fire and worm are working there, and the anathema goes on.

Why had she committed it, syllable by syllable, with a malignant meaning, to memory, and conned it over, with an evil delight?

Had she abused the word of God; and was the spirit she had evoked her master now?

Though her lips were closed, she seemed to herself to be always repeating, fiercely:

"Set thou a wicked man over him, and let Satan stand at his right hand."

"When he shall be judged, let him be condemned: and let his prayer become sin."

"Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered with the Lord; and let not the sin of his mother be blotted out."

"Because he remembered not mercy, so let it be far from him."

"As he loved cursing, so let it come unto him."

She raises her head suddenly.

"I'm nervous," she thinks, with her hands clasped over her dark eyes. "God have mercy on me, and let me hear!"

The voice of the good bishop, clear and old, is heard uttering the brief prayer before his sermon.

She throws herself on her knees, listening with clasped hands, passionately. A dull life rolls away, and warm and vivid youth returns, and the fountain of her tears is opened, and the stream of remembrance, sweet and bitter, rushes in. The scene is unchanged, there is the same old church, there are the rude, familiar oak carvings, the self-same saints and martyrs in the vivid windows. The same organ-pipes breathe through the arches from time to time the same tones to which, in summer evenings just like this, long ago, she had listened, when a loved hand pressed the notes, and the melancholy sounds filled her ears as they do now. Oh! the pain, how nearly insupportable, of scenes recalled too vividly, wanting the love that has made them dear to memory for ever.

Over the heads of the earnest and the inattentive, of dull and worthy townsfolk there assembled, the tremulous silvery tones of the white-haired bishop reach the solitary listener in this dark nook.

The old bishop tenderly enters on his labour of love. He eloquently celebrates his early friend. He tells them how gentle that friend was, how learned, how noble an enthusiast, modest and simple as a child, yet a man of the finest genius. Many of those who heard him now remembered Mr. Howard in the prime of manhood. Two-and-twenty years were numbered since his beloved friend died. They, too, were once young students together—it seemed but yesterday; and he, the survivor, was now an old man, and if the companion whom he had deplored, with foolish sorrow, were now living, he would be but the shadow of the man they remembered, with hair bleached, and furrowed brows, and strength changing fast to weakness. But time could not have changed the fine affections and noble nature that God had given him, and would have only improved the graces that grow with the life of the Spirit. Then follow traits of the character he described, and some passages, perhaps unconsciously pathetic, on the vanity of human sorrows, and the transitoriness of all that is splendid and beautiful in mortal man.

The feeble voice of the bishop is heard no more.

The organ peals, and voices skilled in the mystery of that sublime music rise in a funeral anthem: voices called together from distant places, chant the sublime texts.

Then in one long chord the voices faint and die, like a choir of angels receding from the earth. A silence follows, the organ peals once more, and the people begin slowly to disperse.

Old Mrs. Clink, who opens and locks the pews, is waiting at the foot of the tower-stairs to receive Lady Vernon, whose brougham is to come to the church-door, when the people are gone, and there will be few to canvass the great lady's secret visit to the church.

The funereal swell of the organ still rolls and trembles along the roof, and fills the building, now nearly empty. The sun has just gone down; some fading tints of rose are still on the western sky. She ventures now to the front of the arch, in the shadow of which she has hitherto been hidden. The early twilight, dimmed by the stained windows, fills the church with a misleading and melancholy light; white shafts of marble rise faintly through the obscurity, and she, from her lonely place, unseen, looks down, crying silently as if her heart would break.

POISONOUS FISHES.

Amongst the various dangers to which the crews of exploring and surveying expeditions are exposed, there are few against which it is more difficult to guard than against the risks to which sailors, who are always morbidly desirous of a change of diet, are exposed, from eating fishes whose dietetic value is unknown. There is unfortunately no external characteristic by which an edible species can be distinguished from a poisonous one; and the difficulty of the subject is further increased by the fact that the same kind of fish often affords wholesome food at one period of the year, while at another season it is in the highest degree venomous.

The noxious properties of some fishes are supposed to be dependent on the nature of their food. Munier, in a letter to the well-known naturalist, Sonnerat, written nearly a century ago, states that in Bourbon, and in Mauritius, none of the genus Scarus, or parrot-fishes, which in those islands are called by the popular names of vieille, or old wife, perroquet, &c., are

eaten between December and the beginning of April, being regarded as unwholesome during that period, because they then eat large quantities of coral-polyps. This statement is in part confirmed by Commerson, who, regarding the cataubleue (Scarus capitaneus), says that it gnaws the coral, and is consequently looked upon as a suspicious article of diet, both in the Ile-de-France and in Bourbon. The natives of Bombay are said to reject another species of Scarus (S. harid) for the same reason. Other forms of animal life, as the beautiful medusa or jelly-fish, known as the stephanomia, and the well-known Portuguese men-of-war, or physalia, when eaten by fishes, seem also to render the latter unfit for human food, probably on account of their acrid and irritating properties. Risso describes a Mediterranean fish, called Courpata by the Nice fishermen, which cannot safely be eaten at the periods during which it feeds on this medusa, and the sardine of the Antilles (Harengula humoralis) is so poisonous, after feeding on the physalia, as to occasion death in a few minutes. The common herring is sometimes very unwholesome, although perhaps scarcely poisonous, in consequence of its living on certain minute worms, which are occasionally so abundant in the North Sea as to give a red tint to the water. Notwithstanding the abominations greedily devoured by eels, these fishes may generally be eaten with impunity. There are, however, occasional instances in which they prove deleterious, and M. Virey, in describing a case in which a whole family were attacked with violent pains and diarrhœa, a few hours after eating eels taken from a stagnant castle-ditch, near Orleans, refers to several similar accidents.

In many cases the poisonous properties of fish may be due to the food of which they partake, but this cannot be the sole cause: for, while poisonous fishes are found in localities in which polyps, &c., do not abound, in certain islands surrounded by these zoophytes the fishes are safely edible. For the knowledge of a very important fact bearing on this subject we are indebted to Mr. Caird, a gentleman of high natural-history acquirements, long resident in Trinidad. In a private communication with which he has favoured us, he tells us that the barracouta is, as a general rule, eaten with perfect immunity in Trinidad, while in the neighbouring island of Grenada, and in most of the other parts of the West Indies, death, or lingering sickness for many years, has frequently occurred after eating this fish in its fresh state. Mr. Caird agrees with Dr. Hill of Jamaica (who has published two essays, one on Poisonous Fishes, and one on Fish Poisons, in the Proceedings of the Scientific Association of Trinidad, for 1868), in the view that the barracouta is fit for food in Trinidad, in consequence of the absence of coral reefs in that island, while for the opposite reason it is poisonous in Grenada and elsewhere in the West Indies. Midway between Cuba, Hayti, and Jamaica, lie extensive reefs and shoals of the Formigas (or Ants' Nests). They are several miles in extent, and are so shallow that they can only be navigated by moderate-sized vessels, in a smooth sea. They closely resemble the fringing shore-reefs that have been so often described; presenting to the eye of the naturalist arborescent corals and huge brain-stones, amongst which are a profusion of sea-cucumbers, star-fish, sea-urchins, and sponges. "The Formigas constitute," says Dr. Hill, "a very warren or vivarium of all kinds of fishes." Those who have waded on these coral-reefs are well aware of the pungent scent given out by the polyps which build there, and often experience their stinging influence when they come in contact with the exposed skin. It has been invariably found that all the fishes taken on the Formigas, and the barracoutas especially, are always poisonous. "In this way," says Dr. Hill, "we may account for the general belief that the fishes are poisonous at one end of St. Christopher's, while they are harmless at the other."

In some countries it is a common habit to poison the water of a river with a stupefying drug, in order to catch the fish. Independently of the wasteful character of this procedure (for many more fish are destroyed than can be used for food), it becomes a question of much importance, to ascertain whether the poison may be transmitted to man. The evidence on this point is conflicting; the result probably varying according to the nature of the drug employed. There is, however, no doubt that fishes that have been thus taken become dangerous, if not cooked and eaten at once. As an example of the occasional innocuousness of fishes thus captured, it may be mentioned that in M. de Castelnau's "Voyage dans les parties centrales de l'Amér. du Sud," it is recorded that "a plentiful supply of fishes having been obtained on the great lake near the Rio

Sarayacu in the missions of the Ucayale, by means of the poison residing in the stems of the Barbasco or Necklace-wood, these, after rapidly undergoing the destructive influences of the plant, were eaten without ill effect, and the natives even drank the waters of the lake with impunity."

The age and consequently the size of the fish are supposed in some species to influence their unwholesomeness, certain kinds of fishes being regarded as edible in their youth and poisonous in advanced life. In Havannah there is a fish known to naturalists as the Carana fallax (or the bastard carangue), which is not allowed to be exposed for sale if it weighs more than a kilogram (which is equal to about two pounds three ounces). In the Island of Trinidad it is believed that the becuna* (Sphyræna becuna) may be eaten with safety when small, but becomes poisonous when it attains its full size; and Dr. Court, who practised medicine there for some time, states that the same rule applies to all the fishes said to be poisonous. The natives of Hayti hold a similar opinion regarding a species of Serranus, commonly called the grande gueule, and known by English sailors as the rock-fish. It may attain a length of nearly a yard, but when it approximates to this size it often proves poisonous.

The season of the year is supposed by some writers to have an effect in rendering certain fishes dangerous as food. In the Loyalty Islands, M. Jouan, the captain of a French frigate, has found that many species are dangerous, and even deadly, at some periods of the year, while at others they may be eaten with impunity. It is possible that "the season of the year" may only be another expression for "the food of fishes at certain times." In the Antilles many fishes, including the little nigger (Serranus nigriculus), are avoided during certain months of the year. While the process of spawning is going on it has been observed that certain fishes (probably including those just mentioned) become dangerous articles of food, the eggs and milt being especially virulent. The conger-eel, common on our shores, is said to occasion dysentery if it be eaten at this period. The spawn of the barbel, and to a less degree that of the pike and burbot, will occasionally, if eaten, induce great irritation; and if it be necessary to eat these fishes during the spawning period, the milt and roe should be carefully removed.

In those countries in which poisonous fishes abound, certain tests have long been in general use with the view of deciding whether any particular specimen may be safely brought to table. M. Poey, who is the author of a magnificent work on the Natural History of Cuba, states that "the means of recognising barracouta that are in a condition to produce mischief, is that the root of their teeth will be found of a blackened colour; and that, wanting this mark, the fish may be eaten without fear; or," he adds, "if a silver spoon or coin, placed in the vessel in which the cooking is going on, is not blackened, the fish is equally safe." Dr. Hill, to a certain degree, confirms the efficacy of the tooth test. Seeing a fine-looking barracouta (strictly speaking, it is the becuna that both M. Poey and Dr. Hill mean) nearly three feet long, and apparently in fine condition, he examined the teeth, and, finding them faintly purple at the root, he remarked that the fine look of the fish would doubtless lead to its sale, but that injurious consequences would most probably result to those who partook of it. His prediction proved correct; "and it happened next morning that complaint was common in Spanish Town, that many had suffered the well-known sickness from eating poisonous barracouta."

Similar tests are applied to the true or great barracouta, which is sometimes named Esox barracuda, on account of its likeness, both in form and flavour, to the pike, and is very often poisonous.

The becuna is clearly the fish to which Dr. Badham, in his Prose Halieutics, refers as the barracouda, and regarding which he tells the following anecdote: "A friend of our own, who lately nearly lost his life at a marriage party with several other guests, co-partakers of the fish, gave us the particulars of their common seizure, which occurred very shortly after the conclusion of the repast. After full vomiting they all recovered under the administration of enormous doses of laudanum. On mentioning this circumstance to a West Indian, he informed us that the accident must have proceeded from culpable negligence on the part of the host, who, before introducing such a fish to his guests, should, knowing how dangerous it was, have first given the

* Writers on the ichthyology of the Carribean Sea have made sad confusion between the barracouda and the becuna. Strictly speaking, the former is Sphyræna barracouda, and the latter Sphyræna becuna. In Trinidad the becuna, the smaller of the two species, is almost always called a barracouta. The true fish of this name reaches a length of from six to nine feet, while the becuna does not exceed three feet.

head to one of his negroes to dine upon, which, having taken effect on him, would have effectually prevented all that followed. He added that this was the common way of dealing with quaco and barracouda in some of the Leeward Islands." Dr. Hill, notwithstanding his successful prediction regarding the large becuna with the purple marks at the base of its teeth, observes that as no test has been discovered by which it may be decided whether any kind of fish is poisonous or harmless, "the only sure course to be pursued is that of giving the offal of the suspicious fish to some domestic animal, such as a duck, not likely to reject it, and judging by what ensues."

Dr. Guyon, formerly sanitary inspector of troops at Martinique, refers the poisonous properties of this and other suspected fishes to an incipient decay in the flesh, not amounting to actual putrefaction; and M. Duméril, who has written one of the most elaborate essays on this subject, agrees with him. They support their opinion by the following facts:

1. The mackerel taken at St. Helena is poisonous if kept for a single night; while if prepared on the same day on which it is caught, it is perfectly fit for food.

2. The inhabitants of the Antilles assert that the bonito should be dressed for the table as soon as it is taken from the water; and several cases are on record illustrating the danger of neglecting this precaution.

3. The Chinese will only eat the Tetrodon ocellatus, one of their best fishes, as soon as it is captured.

4. The instances of fish-poisoning occur almost solely where the temperature is high, and especially in the hottest period of the year, when decomposition is most rapid.

The blackening of a piece of silver placed in the vessel in which a poisonous fish is cooked, supports this view; the change of colour being due to the liberation of sulphuretted hydrogen which accompanies decay of tissue.

There seems no conclusive evidence to prove that copper-bottomed ships, or metals in any form, have any connexion with the dangerous properties of fishes, although molluscs (as oysters or mussels) may become poisonous in this way. Nor does there seem any better foundation for the belief that any fishes derive their baleful properties from feeding on the fruits of the manchineel, &c. Dr. Hill has, however, pointed out that fishes have sometimes become unwholesome from being covered over, in the baskets in which they are carried, with the leaves of poisonous shrubs.

Various writers on natural history have given lists of such fishes as are known, or suspected, to be poisonous. Leunis, in his excellent Synopsis der Naturgeschichte des Thierreichs, p. 352, states that about seventy species of fishes are known to have occasioned severe illness and often death, and gives a list of twenty-three species which have a specially bad reputation. M. Duméril mentions eighteen fishes that are known to be poisonous, and observes that "others might certainly be added;" while Dr. Hill enumerates thirteen species, occurring in the Carribean Sea alone, which are either hurtful or dangerous. We shall confine our remarks on this head to a few of the most noxious species; and shall give precedence to the yellow-bill sprat (Meletta thrissa) of the Antilles, which invariably occasions prompt and certain death, with frightful convulsions, in the course of half an hour. Another species of the same genus, common in New Caledonia and other islands of the Indian Ocean, and often called a sardine, is almost equally dangerous.

Several species of sea-porcupines (Tetrodon) and of the allied genus Diodon, possess a very bad reputation. There is a Spotted Tetrodon at the Cape of Good Hope, which has been the cause of so many deaths, that ships anchoring in the bay are warned against it by the local authorities. There is a Tetrodon in New Caledonia whose effects are so terrible, that a fragment of the flesh weighing less than eighty grains, occasioned the death of a pig to which it was administered. Doctor Badham tells us that there is a species in the Nile (Tetrodon lineatus) which is held by the Egyptians to be very poisonous, and he mentions an allied species, the furube of Japan, which, although equally dangerous (causing death within two hours), is found to be too delicate to resist. An imperial decree expressly forbids the Japanese soldiers to eat the furube, and enforces this prohibition by making an express provision that no son may replace his father who has been slain by eating this fish. Notwithstanding this regulation, the furube is in such great repute amongst epicures that it sells at a higher price than any other fish. According to Forster, this fish is eaten by the Japanese when they wish to commit a quiet act of suicide, without going through the formalities of the "happy

despatch." An allied fish, of the genus Diodon, common at Martinique, produces death sometimes almost immediately, and sometimes after two months' suffering.

The Horned Trunk-fish (Ostraceon cornutum) and the Old Wife (Balistes vetula), common off Bourbon and Mauritius, are probably to be placed next in order if classified according to their poisonous properties; after which we must place the becuna, the barracouta, the false carangue, the cataubleue (a species of Scarus), found in Mauritius, and the dog-toothed hog-fish (Lachnolaimus caninus), common to the Carribean Sea.

It is to one or more of the five last-named fishes that the accident that befel an American whaler in March, 1854, must be attributed. The ship stopped at the Island of Juan Fernandez, to take in water, and some of the men began fishing, and caught more than four hundred pounds weight of fish, including carangues, capitaines, and old wives, which were cooked for supper. In a few hours forty-two of the fifty-seven men who formed the ship's company were seized with dizziness, abdominal pains, nausea, and repeated vomitings. Prostration and coma then came on, and in eleven hours from the beginning of the seizure, thirty-four of the sailors were dead. The remaining eight, after suffering extremely for from five to eight days, gradually recovered. The fifteen who were not put on the sick-list, did not altogether escape the bad effects of the meal; several of them suffered from colic and dysentery for two or three days.

A fish, known at St. Domingo as the Tassard guarapucu (Cybium caballa), is sometimes very poisonous. An English physician, Dr. Ferguson, records a case in which, at a dinner-party at the house of the quarter-master-general, every one present ate more or less of the fish, and all were variously affected, according to the quantity taken. The negro cook died, and the lady of the house, who dined almost exclusively off this dish, suffered severely for several months.

We shall conclude this baleful bill of fare with the anchovy of the Indian seas (Engraulis bœlama), which is intensely poisonous, unless, in preparing it for the table, the head and intestines are carefully removed; and with a marine perch (Arripis georgianus) of Victoria and South Australia. This fish, which is called by the fishermen salmon, when old and of a uniform olive tint, and salmon trout in its younger spotless stage, deserves especial notice, because, from its cheapness in the Melbourne and other markets, it is very extensively used as food by the poorer classes, while it has the reputation of frequently causing, even when perfectly fresh, the most violent symptoms of fish-poisoning, accompanied by great suffering, and sometimes ending fatally. Its action, according to Professor M'Coy, is so irregular that the same fish may poison half a family and leave the other half unaffected.

Several of the symptoms of fish-poisoning have been incidentally noticed in the preceding pages. Taking them collectively, they supervene, with varying intensity, in the following order. The patient complains of dizziness, dimness of sight, giddiness, palpitation of the heart, and a feeling of weight and heat in the stomach and abdomen. Obliged to assume the recumbent position, he notices an itching of the skin; the face, and other parts, presenting red or white blotches, surrounded by a crimson ring. In the palms of the hands and soles of the feet the itching amounts to a burning sensation, and if these parts are immersed in water there is a feeling of tingling, which is regarded as characteristic of the disease. Pains in the limbs and at the joints are also commonly present.

In cases likely to prove fatal there are intense abdominal pains, dysenteric symptoms, and often convulsions. When convalescence begins the scarf-skin peels off as after scarlatina, and the hair, and sometimes even the nails, drop off. The effects are often felt for years, and disappear only by degrees, and after removal to a cold climate.

As accidents of this nature may occur when there is no doctor at hand, it may not be out of place to add a word or two regarding treatment. We must, in the first place, attempt to get rid of the poisonous matter by clearing out the stomach with an emetic of a scruple of sulphate of zinc, or with a large teaspoonful of powdered mustard in a tumbler of tepid water. Diluent drinks, such as barley-water, or toast-and-water, should then be freely given, after which, if the patient is not too prostrated, a dose of castor-oil will serve to expel any noxious matter that may have got beyond the reach of the emetic. The poison having thus, as far as possible, been evacuated, its effects must be combated with stimulants, such as coffee, wine, and grog. If the vomiting and intestinal pains do not yield to this treatment, opium, especially in the form of Dover's powder in doses of five grains or more, three or

four times a day, is often of great service.* This brings to a close all that we have to tell regarding the essential subject of the present article; but while in the preceding cases man has been the primary aggressor, there are many instances in which fishes, provided with offensive, or it may be only defensive, weapons, attack and seriously injure fishermen and bathers.† Without noticing such fishes as the sharks, &c., for which man may be regarded as a normal article of diet, we may, in the first instance, refer to the remarkable discovery, made a few years ago (1866) by Dr. Günther, of a fish with a poison apparatus as complete in all its anatomical arrangements as that possessed by the viper or the rattlesnake. The fish in which this organ exists is nearly a foot in length, and is found in the Gulf of Panama; and not more than one or two specimens, preserved in spirits, have, in so far as we know, been received in England. The poison organ consists of an opercular, and of a dorsal part. The operculum or gill-cover is very narrow, and extremely mobile, and is armed behind with a spine eight lines (two-thirds of an inch) in length, and of the same form as the venom-fang of the snake. This spine has a longish slit at the outer side of its extremity, which leads into a canal that terminates in a sac of about double the size of an oat-grain. Although the specimen had been in spirits for more than nine months, it contained a whitish substance like thick cream, which, on the slightest pressure, could be made to flow freely from the opening at the end of the spine. Nothing exactly like a poison-gland could be found near the sac, but a minute tube floated in it, which Dr. Günther thinks was connected with the mucous canals which occur in this and many other fishes.

The dorsal part of the apparatus is composed of two dorsal spines, each ten lines in length, and having a separate sac, with the same arrangements as in the opercular spine. There are, thus, four poison spines, each of which is connected with a sac composed of fibrous walls, having a mucous lining, and containing a secretion which, from analogy, must be regarded as an animal poison.

There is no evidence of this fish ever attacking man, and, as it lives on molluscs and crustaceans, the weapon in this case is probably only one of defence.

This anatomical investigation serves, however, to explain the terrible effects of the wounds inflicted by the dorsal spines of the weever (Trachinus vipera), a fish not very uncommon on our own shores, and other allied fishes found in tropical seas. It had been generally believed, before the publication of Dr. Günther's paper, that the severe and inflammatory effects resulting from these wounds were due to the jagged character of the lacerations that were inflicted; but now it is regarded as at all events a probable, if not an established fact, that the double-grooved spines of these fishes are the channels by which they inject an irritant poison. Dr. Francis Day, in his Fishes of Malabar, describes several sting-rays, siluroids, &c., which, by their pectoral or caudal saw-like spines, occasion fearful wounds, sometimes terminating fatally with lock-jaw.

The Scorpion-fish (Sacchobranchus singio) is perhaps the most terrible of these fishes. A wound from its serrated pectoral spine is so much dreaded by the fishermen, that they would rather cut the meshes of their nets and let all their spoils be lost than endeavour to take it out uninjured. The dreaded spine is always broken off with a piece of stick, and hence perfect specimens of the fish are rare. It is about a foot and a half in length, and inhabits various rivers in India and Cochin-China. The Crocodile-fish (Platycephalus insidiator) is so feared for the wounds which it inflicts with its spines, that it is always knocked on the head when caught. This fish, which is not more than eighteen inches long, is common in the Indian seas. The caudal spine of a large ray (Trigon uarnak) inhabiting the Indian seas, sometimes inflicts terrific wounds. Dr. Francis Day reports the case of an old man in the Cochin-China hospital who was suffering from mortification of the arm from a wound inflicted by one of these fishes, which he was endeavouring to drag out of the sea into his boat. It twisted its tail round his arm, and dragged its spine through the muscles nearly down to the bone. Its caudal fin is four times as long as its body, the serrated spine being situated about the end of the first eighth of the tail, which then tapers off to a very fine extremity.

These sting-rays are widely diffused over seas and rivers of the earth. Mr. Bates (in his Naturalist on the Amazons, second

* If Dover's powder, which contains one grain of opium in ten, is not at hand, fifteen or twenty drops of laudanum may be given in a little water, three or four times a day. It must be distinctly understood that the "five grains or more" in the text refer to Dover's powder and not to opium itself.

† We have intentionally omitted all notice of electric fishes, because they are fully considered in many popular works.

edition, p. 242) describes a species capable of inflicting such severe wounds as to lame vigorous men for many months; and Don Ramon Paez (in his Travels in South and Central America, p. 62) speaks of the ray-fish being much dreaded by the Indians living on the banks of the Apure.

There are many comparatively small fish which, in consequence of some modification of the jaws or teeth, are very dangerous. Spix describes a fish, not larger than a human finger, which is very abundant at Para, on the mouth of the Amazon, and is in the habit of dining off any tender and inviting parts that may be exposed by bathers. They hold on with such bull-dog-like tenacity, that when plucked away from their victims, they carry away a mouthful of flesh with them. In consequence of these little pests, the natives are obliged to adopt a special bathing-dress. The Indian name for the fish is Candiroú; scientifically it is known as Ceteopsis chandiru.

Many of the South American rivers contain a fish called the Payara, shaped somewhat like a sabre, and equally dangerous. Its lower jaw is furnished with a formidable pair of fangs, not unlike those of the rattlesnake, with which it inflicts as smooth a gash as if the cut were made by a razor.

In conclusion, let bathers in unexplored South American rivers beware of the Caribe, whose ravenous and bloodthirsty propensities have caused it to be likened to the cannibal tribe of Indians. Its sharp triangular teeth are so strong that, according to Don Ramon Paez, "neither copper, steel, nor twine can withstand them." The sight or possibly the smell of blood seems especially to excite these fish, and it is extremely dangerous for man or beast to enter the water with even a scratch upon their bodies, and the inhabitants, who are often compelled to cross streams infested by these bloodthirsty little demons (which are seldom larger than an average-sized perch) entertain far more fear of them than even of the crocodile.

GOOD-BYE.

For it is over, dear. Your careless touch
Can thrill or start no quiet pulse of mine;
The voice whose magic wooed and won so much,
Unheeded may its tenderest spell combine.
The strange dark eyes their wonted glances steal,
But not to melt or fire me any more,
And coldly turning from their mute appeal,
I answer that their pristine might is o'er.

A little sorry and a little vexed,
With just a touch of mirth, a touch of shame,
And at my old entrancement quite perplexed,
I think of how we played our idle game.

I, who to-night can neither laugh nor sigh,
Gave many an honest smile, an honest tear,
To our fair folly, born of vanity,
And dead of—well, we carve no tombstone, dear!

I said, just now, a certain phrase you used,
Trying to wake again the old sweet thrill,
That in the pretty words so much abused,
We vowed nor time could change, nor tide could chill.
I said it, all alone, with lips that fain
Had trembled in the loving wont of old;
I could not wake the perished spark again,
The fire is out—the very hearth is cold.

Come clasp my hand in frank free guise, my friend,
Let the dead past bury its foolish dead;
Let the dark curtain fall, the pageant end,
And we pass on with calm untroubled tread.
Forgive, forget, each what the other wrought,
See that the path is smooth, the sky is clear,
And so with quiet unregretful thought,
Own it is well, and all is over, dear!

Yet a strange bitterness is in the words,
A sullen sadness swells to eye and heart,
A moan swells sudden from the stricken chords,
Oh, the fair soulless dream is loth to part!
I would not let a weary anger creep
Round that sweet memory of our long ago,
Weak will! cold love! that clasp'd, yet could not keep.
But there, it all is over, better so!

IN THE FIELD WITH THE PRUSSIANS.

A DAY'S ROUTINE IN A FIELD HOSPITAL.

Directly Marshal Bazaine had retired once more on his stronghold, having killed and wounded as many as he thought fit, the ambulance waggons set out for the battle-field to repair as much of the mischief as was possible. The ambulance waggons are clumsy-looking vehicles, drawn by two horses. On each side of the driver hangs a white flag bearing the cross of the Geneva Convention. The waggons are of two kinds, and are painted grey. They also bear a goodly number of red crosses on their tops and sides. One sort of ambulance waggon is built on much the same plan as a hearse, with a rounded canvas roof; only that, instead of being black, as I said before, their colour is grey. The door of this hearse kind of waggon opens behind on hinges, and discloses four handles. These are the handles of two stretchers, which are laid side by side. Ventilation is provided by the canvas roof. Underneath this waggon are padlocked boxes containing the surgeon's instruments, and various medical and surgical appliances. The other waggons are externally exactly like their fellows, but in reality they are built on a different plan. They open at the top in the same way as a baker's cart might do, and when the top is raised it has to be held open by an iron bar. The uses of these carts, built on such very different principles, are easily to be ex-

plained. The hearse kind carries off from the field of battle only heavily wounded men, and then only two at a time. The baker's cart kind carries off ten or twelve slightly wounded men, who have to sit on the bottom of the waggon; and this is found to be the right proportion, for where you find two badly wounded men alive you may expect to see about ten or twelve slightly wounded.

On the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd of September, the ambulance waggons of nearly the whole Prussian army were busily at work, and this sortie from Metz vied with the battles of Beamont and Sedan in giving work to the ambulance staff. I chose the village of Avancey, near St. Barbe, as a place where my services would, in all probability, be accepted.

Avancey, a little village about eight miles to the north-east of Metz, is situated at the foot of a steep hill, near whose summit lies St. Barbe, at that time the headquarters of General Manteufel, the commander of the First Army Corps. Even from St. Barbe, Avancey looked as pretty a little village as one might wish to see. It lay embosomed in trees and fields, which formed a striking but charming contrast to the white walls and red roofs of its humble houses.

I entered Avancey at mid-day, the day after the battle, and the sight that met my view will not easily be eradicated from my memory. More than five hundred wounded men were to be found in this one village, containing only twenty houses and a couple of barns. There were about sixty French peasants who had remained in the place, and these had to be packed together in about four houses.

I never witnessed anything so barbarous as the way these poor soldiers, many of whom were at the point of death, had to rough it. It was very wet and cold, yet many of these unfortunate creatures were without great-coats, food, or shelter for several hours, and this, be it remembered, after some of them had been lying for thirty-six hours in the pouring rain. Men were hopping about with broken thigh-bones, or crouching on the ground, with shot-wounds in the body, or with mutilated heads and arms from ghastly shell-wounds. All bore a half-torpid look, and everywhere the loss of blood was shocking. It collected in the puddles; it ran down the gutters; all that one saw, touched, or smelt, was blood. At first there were no means of dressing the wounds, so the peasants had to give up sheets and wearing apparel for bandages. When sufficient accommodation had been provided, the few men belonging to the Sanitäts Corps, who were appointed to help at the village, began bringing the wounded under shelter. Some whom they went to assist they found past earthly aid, already lying stark and stiff on the wet ground.

The proportion of surgeons for attendance on the wounded in this Feld Lazareth belonging to the First Army Corps was in one instance one surgeon to one hundred and eighty wounded. The Germans get rid of their slightly wounded with as much expedition as possible; and when I offered my services at Avancey to help the slightly wounded, they were gladly accepted by the head doctor, Dr. Pohl. After working incessantly day and night for three days, we had only about two hundred cases left, but they were certainly as badly a mangled set of men with breath remaining in their bodies, as I saw during the whole war. The head doctor had eternally to be writing reports, goodness knows what of, or to whom they were addressed. Besides this, he attended to a few wounded officers, who were lodged under the same roof with him, so that the bulk of the wounded fell to the share of three German surgeons and myself.

The houses which contained the wounded were very small, and the rooms were crowded to excess. Luckily no typhus or dysentery broke out, though why we were particularly favoured I know not, for the sanitary arrangements of the village were as bad as they could possibly be. My German colleagues and I took up our abode in a two-roomed hut, which had at least the advantage of plenty of fresh air, as the number of window-panes were sadly deficient. We slept on straw sacks, and, like good Christians, gave our feather-beds to our badly wounded patients. The men wounded were for the most part of Polish extraction, but the man to whom I gave my feather-bed looked more like an Italian than a specimen of the Sclavonic race. I could not ask him where he came from, or any unnecessary question, as he was so terribly wounded that it was as much as he could do to breathe at all. When he got the feather-bed, instead of the hard straw sack on which he had been restlessly tossing, he squeezed my hand, and his big black eyes looked thanks. I took a most intense interest in the poor fellow, and did all I could to save his life; but from the first I

had but small hopes of his ultimate recovery. He gradually sank and died. I don't know his name, or place of birth, but I shall never forget his face, and the expressive thanks conveyed in his last moments through his soft, dark eyes.

The wounded had not only to combat against the terrible prostration which follows from shock to the nervous system, but had also to contend with a variety of disagreeables, such as straw sacks without proper mattresses; and as these lay on the hard boards, the torture endured by this alone greatly retarded their recovery. Besides this, the flies, which swarmed without cessation day and night through the windows, gave them no peace. Each man had a small branch to keep them off, but it was a regular duel à la mort between them and their myriads of buzzing enemies.

We used to go our rounds to visit the wounded at six in the morning. The supply of attendants was most miserable; for forty wounded I had but two, and as the wounded were distributed in three houses containing seven rooms, it may be imagined that during twenty-four hours they did not get too much attention. It took a very long time to wash and dress these wounds, and as some of the men were suffering from upwards of six distinct wounds, it was no slight physical as well as mental exertion to attend to all these poor fellows in the day.

At ten o'clock, having perhaps finished half my work, I used to leave house number two in order to join the German surgeons in our little sanctum for breakfast. It could not be said that we had provided ourselves with many delicacies; raw ham and black bread were our invariable comestibles. Our wine was good. It did not strictly belong to us, being stolen, or, to use the German word, "requirirt," and as the château, which had been plundered as far as cellar contents went, was some way off, and unpleasantly near the French lines, it was rather an adventure to get a cart-load of bottles from it. At half-past ten we returned to our wounded, and more washing and dressing wounds went on. I used to get through my first round, having attended to everything myself, about one o'clock. Till half-past two I used to amuse and employ myself in a carpenter's shed, where I improvised some appliances for broken bones, as we were totally without the simplest contrivances. At half-past two the faculty met again at a meal dignified by the name of dinner. At this repast we generally managed to get some potatoes, to eat with the raw ham and black bread. We managed to make ourselves very happy, notwithstanding our dreadful surroundings, and the little respite between our long hours of work being well earned, was always much enjoyed. Near the village were two or three bivouacs, and of these a Uhlan bivouac was my favourite. I formed the acquaintance of the officers, who were as jolly a set of fellows as I have ever met. I used to go for a little ride with one of them, when he could obtain leave, after my dinner. We generally took the road towards Metz, and visited one or other of the Prussian outposts. We used to call it reconnoitring; it was rather hazardous, but very pleasant work, and as it was the only out-door exercise I got during the day, I did enjoy it most thoroughly. On one of my afternoon rides which I took alone, I came to a little lonely cottage; the day was hot and I got off my horse's back to get a drink of water. When I tapped at the door a very old woman came and opened it. I asked for a glass of water. She went to procure it me, and while I was standing waiting, I was startled by hearing a noise resembling the lowing of a cow. I wondered that such a quadruped had remained so near the lines of the Philistines, and looked round the house to see if I could obtain a sight of such a rare animal. Nowhere was it to be seen. I was curious, and looked into the kitchen; no cow there.

"Madame," I said, as the old dame presented me with the glass of water, "may I ask whether there is a cow about the premises?"

"Ah! monsieur," said the little woman, trembling with apprehension, "don't take it away, don't take it away!"

I said, "My dear madame, I am an Englishman; you have nothing to fear from me."

"Vous êtes Anglais, monsieur?"

"Oui, madame," was my answer."

The little old woman dragged me into the kitchen, and opened a door leading down into the cellar.

"Violà, monsieur," she said.

It was pitch dark, but I could hear an animal chewing. How the old dame got the animal down there, or on what she fed it, I know not. When I was leaving she implored me not to tell the Prussians about the cow. I reassured her, and promised her the cow should not be taken away from her. When I was about to leave she nearly jumped into my arms for

joy, so I hastily beat a retreat, and when I had got a couple of hundred yards from the house, I turned round and saw the old lady, nearly frantic with joy, dancing a kind of war-dance, and swinging her crutch round her head in a most demonstrative way.

On returning to Avancey, I thought it would be a very good plan to get this old woman to supply the wounded with milk, so I went to the head doctor, and informed him of my discovery, asking him at the same time to give me a paper to keep the poor old lady's cow safe from Prussian requisition, on the plea that its produce was wanted for the wounded. It was instantly given, and the next day the old woman danced another war-dance over a real signed order, with a big blue eagle seal, which, although of course she could not read a word of it, she knew was meant to save her cow. Every day the milk was sent for, obtained, and greatly appreciated by the wounded. At four o'clock, I began going round to visit the wounded a second time; one of the two sick attendants used to dress the slight wounds, while I looked after the severer ones. In almost every afternoon round I had some fresh surgical appliance ready (the fruit of my workshop labours from one till half-past two). Of course they were very rough, but they answered infinitely better than allowing a broken thigh-bone to be put upon a square block of wood covered by a pillow, which was the usual treatment such unfortunate cases received. This round was usually ended about seven o'clock in the evening, when we came from our various "stations," as we called them, and met at Abendessen, or supper. At this meal, raw ham and black bread were again the most conspicuous articles of consumption; but we usually obtained some plums from a large garden, which, although it was robbed by nearly every soldier who went through the village—and as the whole of the cavalry bivouacked in the neighbourhood passed through, night and morning, to water their chargers, there were a good many robbers—seemed almost inexhaustible. Once, but only once, I procured a dish of French beans. After the repast, we generally compared notes as to how our several patients were getting on. On the whole, taking the frightful wounds, and in many cases the number of them, into consideration, there were remarkably few deaths; but some who did pass away, died in the most awful agonies. I shall not be likely to forget the first death that occurred in one of my houses; it was a lingering death of continued suffering, lasting four days, and the poor fellows lying on their mattresses all round were nearly frightened out of their wits by watching the dying man's sufferings. When the body was taken out to be buried, I found tears rolling down many of the men's cheeks; the poor fellow had been the wit of the regiment, and a great favourite. It was very difficult to converse with some of these men; in fact, many of them could only understand so much German as was necessary to enable them to obey military words of command when given. Most of them were much more like Poles than Germans. Almost all the wounded belonged to the German army. I think out of the two hundred wounded there were but four Frenchmen. The French had removed their own wounded from the battle-field, taking them back into Metz when they retired. At nine o'clock we went our last rounds, which took us till eleven at night. As most of the wounded were in too much pain to sleep, their skin had to be injected with morphia, and it was necessary to repeat the operation if the first injection did not take effect. These operations took some time, but it was perfectly necessary, for the poor fellows could get little or no attendance between twelve and six the next morning. We then met again at the little house; we either talked over the war, and how and when it would end, or sang Die Wacht am Rhein, or some such song; and then rolling ourselves in our rugs we slept on our straw sacks, more soundly than many a rich man on his bed of down. So day after day passed quickly along. Sometimes some of the wounded, having got over their wound-fever, were taken by waggons to the nearest railway station, which was something like twenty miles off. One day I remember the waggons were sent to convey a number of men who had just recovered from wound-fever; they had been ordered at a certain hour the day before. The next day at seven A.M. the carts appeared; it so happened that the day was as wet as it could possibly be; the rain was coming down in sheets. The waggons drew up at the doors of the various houses at which the wounded were lodged, and at once into each cart a couple of bundles of straw were pitched and strewn over the bottom of the cart. Now the wounded had to be newly dressed and bandaged, and it was eight o'clock before they were all ready. The rain, instead of

abating, was coming down worse than ever, and when the order to mount was given, about forty badly wounded men, some with bandaged heads and arms in slings, hobbled to the carts. After mounting, in some instances with great difficulty, and seating themselves on the wet straw, each man was given one blanket and two cigars. The blankets were about the size of door-mats when doubled in half; the cigars must have got soaked in a couple of minutes when once lit. However, there was nothing for it, the train was to start at twelve, and the orders were peremptory; so the wounded, some of whom were in a most critical state, were taken out of their warm beds and sent a journey of over twenty miles in such weather and in open carts, simply because some one had been stupid enough to say that, wet or fine, they must go. We all thought it sheer murder, but such is the way in war time.

MARRIAGES OF ENGLISH PRINCESSES.

It may be useful to disabuse the public mind of the erroneous impression now prevalent, that English princesses have seldom married commoners of their own country; few practices have been more common. With the proof of this fact we have ventured to interweave a few picturesque incidents attending the ceremonials, chiefly those of the earlier epochs, when life had more romance, and costume more colour and splendour, than they now boast.

Cæcilia, the eldest daughter of William the Conqueror, took the veil; Adeliza, the second, betrothed to Harold, died young; Matilda, the third, after being betrothed to Earl Edwin, entered a convent after her lover's murder; Constance, the fourth, married Earl Alan, Duke of Bretagne, and, like her sisters, died at an early age. To Adela, the youngest, it was alone permitted to marry and to live long and happily. This lady, who seems to have been a poetess, and, indeed, altogether a strong-minded woman, married Stephen, the son of the Earl of Blois. The marriage was twice celebrated, first at Breteuil, and then at Chartres. Splendid entertainments and universal joy attended the ceremony in both places.

A higher fate was destined for Matilda, the only daughter of Henry the First. She had scarcely attained her seventh year, when an embassy of wise and learned German barons, sent by Henry, the Emperor of Germany, arrived in England to demand her in marriage. The king instantly levied a tax of three shillings on every hide of land in England, and the next year sent the little lady over with ten thousand marks of silver in her pocket for a dowry, intrusting her to the care of Roger Fitz-Richard, a trustworthy person, and a train of gallant English knights. Her future lord met her at Utrecht, and the following Easter the betrothal took place. At her coronation, at Mayence, the bride was held in the arms of the Archbishop of Treves, while the Archbishop of Cologne placed over her baby brow the cumbrous diadem. The young lady was then relegated to school to learn German, and four years afterwards the real marriage was celebrated at Mayence. She grew up a good and gentle woman; but the German husband proved grasping, stern, cruel, morose, and passionate, and Matilda must often have wished herself back in England. She afterwards married the proud Geoffrey of Anjou, with whom she quarrelled ceaselessly. Her subsequent wars with her rival, the ambitious Stephen, are too well known to need recital here.

Matilda, Stephen's eldest daughter, died young; and Mary, his second, scandalised the whole Catholic world by first becoming Abbess of Rumsey and then marrying an Earl of Flanders; it must be admitted, however, much against her wish. Matilda (this was a favourite English name in those days), the eldest daughter of Henry the Second, again honoured Germany by looking there for a husband. Henry the Lion, the powerful Duke of Saxony and Bavaria, sought her hand. The bill for her trousseau still exists in the Pipe Roll. She took with her twenty-eight "pairs of chests," probably silver, and seven scarlet saddles with gilded reins. Her bridegroom met her at Minden, and there the marriage took place. The nuptial feasts at Brunswick, Henry's capital, lasted several weeks. Eleanora, Matilda's next sister, married Alphonso the Third, King of Castile. At the betrothal, which took place at Saragossa, Alphonso settled the revenues of three towns on his bride for her toilet expenses alone. The marriage was celebrated at Burgos. Joanna, the youngest daughter of Henry the Second, married William, Prince of Sicily. The marriage took place at Palermo, which city the bride entered riding on a white palfrey. Joanna, the eldest daughter of King John, married Alexander of Scotland. After her marriage at York, her English attendants

were afraid at first to venture into Scotland, and her husband was so poor, that his royal brother-in-law had to pay his travelling expenses to York. Alexander settled upon his wife one thousand pounds a year, and levied a tax of ten thousand pounds scot to pay the marriage portions of his two sisters, whom he at once married to rich English nobles. Isabella, John's second daughter, who married Frederick, Emperor of Germany, went over to Germany with great store of plate and jewels, fourteen dresses, twenty-four zones, a box of chessmen, two beds, two blankets, and eighteen towels. At her marriage, at Worms, four kings, eleven dukes, and thirty earls and marquises, graced the nuptials. Eleanora, Isabella's sister, married the Earl of Pembroke, almost the first precedent of the union of a subject with an English princess. Margaret, the eldest daughter of Henry the Third, married a prince of Scotland. Ten pieces of cloth-of-gold were given her for dresses, robes of green were provided for her waiting-women, and one of scarlet, trimmed with miniver, was bestowed on her governess, Matilda de Cawthorpe. The marriage took place at York, and the wedding feast cost the Archbishop of York forty thousand pounds of our money. The town of York contributed five hundred deer and one hundred wild boars; and, for a parting present, Henry gave his son-in-law one hundred and nine pounds towards his travelling expenses. Beatrice, another daughter of Henry the Third, married John of Bretagne, and afterwards accompanied her husband to the Crusades.

Eleanora, the eldest daughter of Edward the First, after being betrothed to Alphonso of Aragon, married Henry, Duke of Bar (le Duc). At her marriage the Duke of Brabant, the victor in seven tournaments, was killed in a joust. Joanna, the third daughter of Edward the First, married Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Gloucester. The marriage was at Westminster, and she afterwards went to reside in her husband's romantic house at the village of Clerkenwell. Her father gave her, on this occasion, one hundred silver dishes, sixty silver spoons, six gold cups, twenty golden clasps, and twenty zones of silk to give away to whom she pleased. On becoming a widow, this self-willed princess, to her father's indignation, married a knight of humble birth. This lady's sister, Margaret, fourth daughter of Edward the First, gave her hand to a Duke of Brabant. The marriage took place at Westminster. Four hundred and twenty-six minstrels were present at the banquet, and among them about three thousand pounds of our present money was distributed. As for the illuminations at the palace, they were so tremendous that the chronicler mentions that four boys had been occupied for fourteen days in collecting the necessary candles. On the dress of the sister of the bride were sewn fifty-three dozen silver buttons.

But we must pass on now to the family of Edward the Second. Isabella, the eldest daughter, slighted by the Earl of Flanders, who disliked a marriage forced upon him, fell in love with Bernard d'Albret, a Gascon nobleman. This match, however, was also broken off, and eventually the fickle lady married a French hostage, the young Lord de Courcy, famed for his skill and grace in all knightly and courtly accomplishments. The princess was thirty-three, the husband scarcely twenty-seven. The marriage took place at Windsor, and King Edward disbursed one hundred pounds among the local minstrels on the occasion. The bridegroom became Earl of Bedford, and during the great war between France and England, to avoid breaking faith with either France or England, went to Italy to fight for the pope against the Visconti.

The marriage of Blanche, the eldest daughter of Henry the Fourth, with Louis of Bavaria, was attended with great ceremonials. It is particularly mentioned that the Richard Whittington, who plays so important a part in London civic traditions, supplied from his great warehouse cloths-of-gold for the fair princess's outfit. The marriage was celebrated at Cologne, and soon after the young husband wrote from Heidelberg to his father-in-law an enthusiastic letter extolling the beauty of his wife. "When," says the royal writer, "that countenance, lovely beyond the daughters of men, presented itself before me, then indeed my very heart exulted with joy, for not merely is her form English, but it shines with such angelic loveliness that all the nobles of the people would worship it." The angelic bride was only thirteen. The next year Henry failed to pay the sixteen thousand nobles, the second instalment of Blanche's dower, and Duke Louis, hard beset by the rebellious Bohemians, had to dun his wife's father in pretty set terms.

The marriage of Margaret, eldest daughter of Henry the Seventh, with James of Scotland, is picturesquely told by the chroniclers. James was so anxious to see his future wife when she arrived at Dalkeith,

that he rode there under pretence of a hunting party, and called at the castle where she was. At one of these visits he found her and her ladies playing at cards; then he played to her on the lute and clavichord, and one of her English lords-in-waiting sang the king a ballad. The marriage took place at Holyrood, and for the occasion the rooms were strewn with fresh grass. The bride wore a gown of white damask, lined and bordered with crimson velvet, her long fair hair floated loosely over her shoulders, and at the altar the king refused to kneel till Margaret had first done so. A day or two after, Margaret made a present to the heralds of her wedding robe. Margaret was scarcely fourteen years old; her husband was more than thirty.

Mary, Henry the Seventh's third daughter, after being wooed by the Prince of Castile, was married from motives of mere state policy to Louis the Twelfth. When the Earl of Worcester went over to Paris to arrange the marriage, he wrote to Wolsey a letter describing how the French king had shown him a chest containing fifty-six pieces of rubies and diamonds, and another goodly coffer full of collars, bracelets, and beads. "All these are for my wife," Louis said, "but she shall not have them all at once, as I would have many kisses and thanks for them." The marriage took place at Abbeville, but was, shortly afterwards, dissolved by the death of the bridegroom, and the young widow soon married the Duke of Suffolk, Francis the First encouraging the match. Letters still exist showing the rage of Wolsey at this stolen marriage, and, indeed, the death of Brandon was at first contemplated by some of the council. Mary's second marriage took place in the little oratory chapel of the Hôtel de Clugny.

Elizabeth, the eldest daughter of James the First, after being threatened with French and Spanish husbands, married Frederic, Prince Palatine, afterwards the unfortunate King of Bohemia. At the first interview the prince humbly kissed the hem of the princess's gown, she gracefully curtsying lower than accustomed, and "with her hand staying him from that humblest reverence, gave him at his rising a fair advantage (which he took) of kissing her." He then whispered in her ear a few words of lover's flattery. King James, highly pleased with the young German prince, took him aside into his bedroom, and presented him with a ring valued at eighteen hundred pounds. During this visit Prince Frederic resided at Essex House in the Strand. The princess's apartments at Whitehall had been remodelled for this occasion, fresh carpets laid down, and new tapestries of the History of Abel hung up. The marriage took place in the chapel of Whitehall. The pair had previously, rather to the horror of the proud German nobles, been three times publicly asked in church. The bride shone in a robe of Florence cloth of silver, and her train was borne by sixteen young ladies clad in white satin. The ceremony over, a great golden bowl full of wine passed round, and every one present drank to the health of the newly married pair. The palsgrave, on his return from the chapel, was preceded by six German trumpeters, who sounded on six silver trumpets, all the court shouting, "God give them joy, God give them joy!" The banquet was followed by a masque. The City of London, a day or two after, presented to the bride a splendid chain of Oriental pearls, valued at two thousand pounds, and an absurd report being spread that a popish vessel full of pocket-pistols had secretly arrived from Spain, a band of zealous citizens, headed by a substantial alderman, was added to the guard at the palace. The writ to raise the money requisite for this marriage produced only twenty thousand five hundred pounds, it not being stringently enforced, and left the king a loser, for he had spent fifty-three thousand two hundred and ninety-four pounds in connexion with the marriage, exclusive of the bride's portion of forty thousand pounds. Lord Harrington, Elizabeth's guardian, lost three thousand five hundred pounds by the match, and the king, unable to repay him, granted him in recompense a patent for the privilege of coining brass farthings. The court, in a fit of economy, at last dismissed the household provided for Prince Frederic. One of the prince's wedding presents to his wife was a gilt coach from Paris.

Mary, the eldest daughter of Charles the First, was married, when only a child of ten, to the Prince of Orange, then only fifteen. The prince came over with a fleet commanded by the celebrated Van Tromp. He was lodged in Arundel House, in the Strand, and had a private garden key to Somerset House given him, so that he might visit his little lady when he liked. The prince was appointed ambassador to the States of Holland to heighten his rank,

and many grumblers complained of this as a proof of the prince's unworthiness to mate with an English princess. The dean of the Chapel Royal taught the prince all the proper responses, both in English and French. The marriage took place in Whitehall Chapel. The bridegroom was attired in a dress of rich crimson velvet, with a vandyke collar of deep point-lace. The princess wore a robe of silver tissue, and her hair was knotted up with silver ribbons. Wren, Bishop of Ely, used no titles in the service, but merely said, "This man and this woman," and "I, William, take thee, Mary," for so the king had directed. After supper the little princess was placed on a state bed of blue velvet, in the presence of the Dutch ambassadors and all the ladies of the court, and the boy-prince of Orange, in a robe of blue and green satin, lay beside her for a few minutes. On leaving, King Charles gave the prince a diamond-hilted sword, while the little princess took off a jewel and presented it to him, and this love-token he fastened on his breast. She also gave the ponderous Dutch ambassadors roses of silver ribbon, with which they looped up their broad-brimmed hats. In Charles the Second's scandalous court it was always supposed that Mary eventually secretly married Harry Jermyn, but there is no proof that this is more than a rumour.

Henrietta Anne, the fifth daughter of Charles the First, married the Duke of Orleans, a brother of Louis the Fourteenth. Her first voyage to France was unfortunate, for the vessel was all but lost, and the princess, falling ill of a fever, had to return to England till she recovered. The marriage eventually took place in the English chapel at the Palais Royal, and a petit souper afterwards was all the rejoicing. This amiable princess was generally supposed to have been murdered by poison poured into a jug of chicory-water. Pepys, who always found royal personages beautiful and wise, thought the Princess Henrietta very pretty, but still, he allows, below his expectation, not to mention that her style of wearing her hair frizzed up short to her ears was unbecoming; and, he adds, uxoriously, "My wife, standing near her, with two or three black patches on her, did seem to me much handsomer than she." That was as it should be.

In the marriages of subsequent princesses there is little to record. As manners grew simpler, and dress less gorgeous, the entertainments that preceded and followed such marriages became more and more commonplace. The marriage of the Princess Charlotte with Prince Leopold perhaps produced more enthusiasm than ever hailed such an event in England, but the details of the ceremony itself are uninteresting.

Our readers will, at least, see by the few facts we have collected, trivial though they may be, how very much more frequent the marriages of princesses with mere subjects have been than is generally supposed.

DEAR DAVIE.

I KNOW it is the fashion to call servants selfish and mercenary, and to make out that they have all the faults common to humanity in excess of every one else; but we had an old servant whom I do not think any one could have disliked; at least I used to think so, until we had bitter proof of the contrary. He was the last of quite a long race of retainers in our family, for the Moffats had been servants at the Hall for three generations; and old David, or "dear Davie," as we used to call him, was as much a part of our family as one of ourselves. He had come in when a mere boy as a kind of general helper, rising by the orthodox stages till he had grown to be head man of everything; nominally butler, but in substance intendant, maître d'hotel, man-housekeeper, "acting lieutenant under a very easy-going captain," as poor papa used to say.

He was an old man now, past seventy; and I dare say he did cling to his place and privileges with perhaps at times uncomfortable tenacity. But who would have had the heart to take them from him? Our father, a kind-hearted, good-natured man, let him have his own way; and what he thought right to do, of course we thought it right to imitate. He and Davie had been boys together, or rather Davie had been a young man when he was a boy, and had taught him all that boys like to learn of rural life and sports; so that he always remembered this, and never quite got over the feeling of Davie's superior age and wisdom on certain points. My two brothers also were very fond of him, so were we girls, and he of us. And then he was the best creature in the world.

Dear Davie! I think I see him now, with his tall, thin, square-cut figure just beginning to be a little bowed at the shoulders; those flat angular shoulders

from which his clothes hung as if from two pegs; his fine white head, and mild blue eyes, and that nice manner of his, which was such a pleasant mixture of familiarity, affection, and respect. All our troubles were Davie's, as were all our pleasures. When Norah married so well, Davie was quite as miserable and proud and happy as any of us; and when Charlie went to India, nine years ago, the dear old man cried as openly as both Lucy and I did; and he was almost as glad as we ourselves when we used to get his letters. Indeed, Charlie, the youngest of us all, had perhaps been his favourite between the two brothers; if he could be said to have liked one best when he loved both so well. And when that terrible sorrow came upon us, and we lost first papa and then Reginald, both in the same year, I am sure Davie was like another father to Lucy and me, he was so kind and tender and faithful.

Since Charlie had been in India he had married. Of course we had not seen his wife yet; but now that our darling Reginald had gone, our eldest, our pride and stay, Charlie was the heir, and had to come home with his wife and children—there were two, both boys—to take possession of the Hall. You must not think that Lucy and I thought only of ourselves in all this sorrow if I tell you that, beside being so unutterably miserable, we were also uneasy and uncomfortable. The family tradition of us Lombes had always been one of close union. We had been a notoriously united set of people for generations; perhaps too much so; and there had never been a question of right or sufferance to the old home among the unmarried women. Papa's two sisters had lived with us till they died; and here were Lucy and I, in the same condition with respect to Charlie. But somehow we doubted Kate, Charlie's wife; and we had an idea that she would not like the arrangement so much as dear mamma had done. All her letters to us had been strangely cold. I cannot tell you how it was they struck us so unfavourably, but they did; more I imagine by what they did not say than by what they actually expressed. She never signed herself our sister; never called Charlie anything but "my husband," or "your brother;" always wrote of poor papa as "Mr. Lombe;" of Regy as "Mr. Reginald," or "your elder brother;" and, after papa's death, she called him "Mr. Lombe" in the only letter she had written to us; and in fact the whole tone was stiff, reserved, and unfriendly. However, she was now to be mistress of the old house—dear, handsome, generous Reginald, ah! what a loss that was!—and Charlie and she were coming over by the next mail.

As for Charlie, of course we had no doubt of him. He was a Lombe, a true Lombe; but all the same his wife might make it a little unpleasant for us if she chose, especially as we had been mistresses of the place so long: at least Lucy had. For even I was beyond thirty, and our mother had died when Charlie was born, so that for more than twenty years Lucy had had the command, and we could scarcely understand anything else. We had lived, too, in the real old-fashioned English way, seldom leaving home, and taking a personal interest in all that went on in the village and estate. So that we had plenty of occupation, and a not very narrow sphere of action and influence. But Kate, Charlie's wife, was to be mistress now. Lucy and I often wondered how we should get on with her, and what she would leave in our hands.

Ah! can I ever forget that day! Lucy and I were sitting in the drawing-room after dinner, very sad, very broken, speculating on the time when we might expect to see Charlie and his wife, and trying to drown our vague fears of her in our joy at having our brother with us again. We made out that they would be at Marseilles about now; and that it would not be long, say a week, before they would be at home. While we were sitting there talking, we saw a horseman come at full speed up the avenue, a noisy ring tore at the hall-bell, and soon after Davie came hurrying into the room with a telegram. Telegrams were not so common then as they are now, and they had never been usual at the Hall, where indeed they were specially dreaded. Davie looked frightened, we girls both trembled, and then Lucy opening the cover read just these words from Kate: "Your brother died at sea a fortnight ago. Prepare for my arrival at the Hall in a few days."

Telegrams cannot be sympathetic, I know, but this read to us so cruel, so heartless, and unfeeling! It came so abruptly. The news was so crushing, so awful. I cannot express what it was to us. Charlie dead! the last of our house. Father and two brothers all gone in less than a year. We had scarcely recovered from the shock of poor papa's death, when Reginald was taken from us; and now Charlie, the last of the generation; and poor Lucy and I left alone. Alone, with a stranger to come and take possession of the old house, and

to bring up in ways different from ours the future master of the Hall, the future representative of the Lombes. Cannot you understand all the different waves of sorrow that overwhelmed us? Grief at the loss of our only brother, family pride, and old-time conservatism, our utter loneliness, and the vague antagonism existing between us and Kate—all these smaller feelings helped to swell the current; though the fact that Charlie was dead, and that we should never see him again, was the most terrible sorrow of all.

Well, we did not go mad, nor break down into illness; we lived through the next few days in a kind of crushed despair; feeling something, I fancy, as criminals must feel before their trial, not knowing what was to be our fate. And in a few days Kate arrived. She sent no further intimation. We did not know where to write to her, and all we had to do was, as she said, to prepare for her coming.

It was just a week after that dreadful telegram, and it was early in the day, I remember the very hour—exactly twenty minutes past one; a fine, bright summer day—when three hack flies drove through the gates and up the avenue. They were loaded with trunks and packages of all kinds; on the outside of the first was a native servant in his Eastern dress, on the last an English servant in livery; but a different livery from ours. The servants flocked into the hall, and we went to the door to meet our sister. Naturally, at least it seemed natural to us, dear Davie stood out on the step with us. He was so like one of our family, that neither Lucy nor I thought for a moment whether it would look odd or not to a stranger that he should be standing on a level with ourselves, and occasionally turning round to speak to us with the affectionate familiarity of a poor kind of uncle.

In the first fly was Kate alone. She was very pretty, and her jaunty, fresh, coquettish weeds set her off immensely. She was a small, round kind of woman, with large light eyes that looked as if there had never been a tear in them—those dry, glittering eyes, like polished stones or metal, with narrow upper lids, and a trick of staring steadily, as if nothing could lower or abash them; the mouth was thin but prettily curved, and the nose was small but prominent. It was a face that ended in the tip of the nose—don't you know what I mean?—with the forehead and chin sloping backwards; but though it was decidedly a pretty, it was not a pleasant face. It was fair, and the colours were pure and the outlines rounded, but it was a face that had neither tenderness nor sympathy in it; it was as hard in its expression as if cut out of wood.

She got out of the fly deliberately, and shook hands with us in a quiet matter-of-fact way, drawing back as Lucy bent to kiss her: I took the hint, and did not offer: and, looking at us full in our faces, she said, in a slow, monotonous voice, "You are Miss Lombe, I presume?" to Lucy; to me, "And you are Miss Mary?"

She stared with cold surprise at Davie, who had come forward in his kind old-fashioned way, half offering his hand; and that was her sole acknowledgment of him; and then she turned round and spoke to her servant sharply in Hindostanee, while he stood bowing and salaaming in a way that seemed quite shocking to Lucy and me, accustomed to treat English servants with respect, and to be treated by them with independence.

In a few moments, however, the second fly drove up, in which were a black nurse and two children. The dear children! You can fancy how Lucy and I yearned towards them! Poor Charlie's boys! and the last of the Lombes! The black man, a little rudely I thought, thrust himself before old Davie and opened the door of the fly, and we ran up and held out our arms to them; but the younger began to scream, and hid his face in the ayah's neck, and the other made naughty faces, and called out to us in Hindostanee to go away, and that we were pigs, and ugly old women. So we learnt afterwards. Kate laughed, and said, "Cheep, cheep;" the ayah smiled and looked on helplessly; and —oh, dear! it was a dreadful meeting! Kate so cold and indifferent, the strange servants, the reluctant children, and poor Charlie only so lately dead!

Lucy and I, with tears in our eyes, and that dreadful spasm at our hearts, led the way into the house, when Kate, stopping in the hall, asked abruptly, looking at the servants generally but not acknowledging their curtsies, "Which of you women is the cook?" just as if she had been speaking to people at an inn. Jane Clewer came forward and curtsied. She had lived with us fifteen years, and was a great favourite with us all.

"Can you cook well?" asked Kate.

Jane smiled nervously, coloured, and curtsied again. "I believe I know my business, ma'am," she answered.

"So you all say," said Kate, in such an

odd bloodless kind of way! "However, I shall soon be able to judge if you will suit me or not. Prepare tiffin—luncheon, I mean—at once if you please, and take care the rice is properly boiled. Saïd will show you how to boil it, as you will not know. English servants never do."

Then she spoke to the servant in Hindostanee, while poor Jane got scarlet and looked at us, scarcely knowing whether to blaze out on the spot, or take her humiliation quietly. But I felt for the poor thing, with all her English ways and prejudices, having a black man—a heathen—set over her in her own kitchen, to teach her such an elementary thing as how to boil rice! However, there was no help for it, so they all filed out of the hall again, and Saïd, salaaming, followed them; while little Regy, the eldest boy, pulled the tail of our Persian cat till she cried; and the younger one ran screaming after the peacock we had just begun to tame, and frightened it away over the lawn into the shrubbery.

"Now you must show me the house," said Kate, turning to Lucy. "We shall have time before tiffin is ready, and then I shall know where I am, and what to arrange."

So we understood it all now. Of course we expected her to be mistress; but we thought she would have allowed us to resign our authority, instead of which she took it out of our hands. Don't you know the difference? Well! I need not go into this. I give you just that little opening sketch as an indication of all that followed. Before Kate had been an hour in the house she was fully installed; and had even asked for the keys, saying in her quiet manner, "I must ask you to label these for me, Miss Lombe, till I have learnt which is which," and making Lucy and me feel only guests in our old home. She took the head of the table, and asked Lucy "to be kind enough to take the foot;" she assigned the children their places, and made her two men, Saïd and Ross, of more importance than Davie, whom indeed she ordered about and spoke to as he had never been spoken to in his life. She said very little to us, but talked to the little boys and her Indian servants, always in Hindostanee; and altogether she made herself as utterly unpleasant as it was possible for her to do. And yet we could say nothing. You cannot very well complain of people for that intangible kind of rudeness which only wounds you but does not strike you openly.

We found out afterwards that she had made up her mind to this course of action from the first. She thought we might be difficult to move by gentler means, that we were old maids who had grown into the soil as it were, so she determined on uprooting us at once. According to her view of things it was the most merciful way. I do not mean to deny that we should have liked a little fuss over our abdication; we should; we should have liked to give up our authority generously, with a little scene, a little effusion; we should have liked the importance of teaching her our ways, and of training her to follow in the Lombe footsteps. That was very natural, for we *were* old maids; thin, home staying, fixed in thought and habit; but we were not, I think, unjust or bad-hearted, and we wished to do what was right by Charlie's wife and children. Still we were Lombes. The house had been ours for all our lives, and the family traditions were strong, as I told you. Perhaps it was all equally natural; Kate's unconditional assumption of authority, without any reference to us, and our desire to make ourselves of just so much importance, by giving up gracefully as of our own free-will, what she took as her right.

Of course the servants were the chief trouble. Kate did not get on with any of ours, and Ross, her footman, was given all the functions of the butler if Davie retained the name. Lucy and I had an utter horror of this man Ross. He was a bold, showy, impudent fellow who treated us all, even Lucy and me, in the most free-and-easy manner possible, and with such covert disrespect as if we knew nothing beyond crows' nests and buttermilk. Davie frankly hated the man; but Kate of course upheld him, and between him and Saïd our poor old friend's life was by no means a pleasant one at this moment. Nothing but his affection for us kept him to his post; but, as he used to say, his eyes filling with tears, "I mistrust them, young ladies, and I will not leave you, dear children, in their power." Dear Davie! we were always "young ladies" and "dear children" to him. And indeed both Lucy and I had a vague mistrust of the new men; but perhaps that was because we were such thorough old maids, and so disinclined to anything new.

Kate had been at the Hall about a fortnight, when all the servants were called up one day, and, without any previous warning, received notice to leave that day month.

"I have no fault to find with you," she

said, in her quiet monotonous way; "and you will all have excellent characters; but you have been too long in the place, you are too familiar with your former mistresses, and there is too much gossip and secret caballing going on. As I dismiss you all, I single out none, but I must be mistress in my own house, and do what I like without all the remarks that are made now. So, for all our sakes you must, every one of you, find another situation."

You may imagine how this took us all by surprise. Some of the maids fell to crying, Jane Clewer was one; and Davie, dear Davie! I thought the old man would have fainted. He staggered back as if he had been struck, and I ran up to him and put a chair for him.

"Not David, Kate," cried Lucy, and put her hand on his shoulder; "Davie is one of our own family, poor papa's friend, and Charlie's. Davie must not go; Charlie would never have let him go."

"And old Moffat with the rest," said Kate coldly. She never got excited. "He is past his work and very troublesome; and I should think, with his long service and absurdly extravagant wages, he must have saved a fortune by now; certainly quite enough to live on. Besides I wish a younger man at the head of the establishment." She meant Ross.

"Then if Davie goes, Mary and I will go too," said Lucy, excitedly.

Kate bowed. "That is quite for yourselves to decide," she said. "If you choose to stay here I will not turn you out; if you wish to go I will do nothing to keep you against your will. You must act just as you think best."

"We will leave," said Lucy again. "Mary, don't you say so too?"

"Leave, yes! without a moment's hesitation," I answered. "If we do not go of our free-will we shall be forced to go before long. This is meant for us."

"You are wrong there," said Kate, "I would not have forced you. If you like to leave because I wish to change the servants" — she lifted her shoulders and spread out her hands—"you are your own mistresses," she added, with a smile full of meaning. "But do you think it well to discuss these delicate matters before the domestics?"

"They are our friends!" I cried warmly. "The only friends we have in the house."

"I do not envy your choice," returned Kate; and, with a mocking bow, "I beg to leave you to your select associates." And she swept out of the room.

Of course all this was very dreadful. That we should have to leave our dear old home was bad enough; but that we, the Lombes, should have to confess to family jars, to be the cause of public talk and public scandal, was worse than all. But it must be done. We knew that this dismissal of our old servants, specially of Davie, the change of living, the change of style altogether, were so many blows aimed at us, and for self-respect we felt that we must withdraw from further suffering.

There was a small house about two miles away, that we had always liked. It was just on the borders of Calne Wood, in a lovely situation, and the very thing for Lucy and me. For we were not rich. Our portions were small, in consideration of our being at home; but we were proud enough to resolve that what we had should be sufficient. We were to take Jane Clewer and Davie with us. But the dear old man would not hear of such a thing as "wages." He said that Mrs. Charles was right there; he had saved enough to keep himself all his life, and he would not take a penny from us.

"I know what you have, young ladies," he said; "five hundred a year between you; and you'll find that a tight fit after the Hall. Jane there can take her wages, she is young yet (she was nearly fifty), and must think of her old age; and you'll have to have a man for the garden, and the boots and shoes, and all that, but I'll be your man without wage, so no more need be said about it."

Was not that being good? No wonder we called him dear Davie! And really, servant though he was, we felt no degradation in the arrangement. We would not have taken a shilling from Kate; but dear Davie was our own, and she was a stranger!

I cannot understand what I am going to tell you now. How it all came about, what it all meant, I do not know, and can only conjecture; but the story is a true one, if confused and unintelligible.

It was the night before Lucy and I were to leave the Hall. There had been a rather warm dispute with Kate about some old silver that had belonged to our mother, and which Lucy and I thought we ought to have had; a silver tea-service, candelabra, side-dishes, &c.; and as the Lombe family silver was rich and abundant, this, which was never used, and which we had always looked on as belonging to us by right, would not have been missed. But Kate, in her character of trustee for her

children, as she used to say, would not part with a single piece. Everything in the Hall had devolved on them, she said, with her immovable air; and she had not the power, if the inclination, to give us anything whatsoever. There had been sharp words about this silver, and Davie had upheld us, and Ross had heard the dispute; and then Kate ordered that special chest to be placed in her own room, as if we were thieves!

In the middle of the night we were all aroused by a hideous noise. Breaking up our sleep we could not tell what it was; but it was a dreadful mixture of groans and screams coming from Kate's room. Lucy and I, who slept in adjoining rooms, threw on our dressing-gowns and ran across the corridor to where Kate slept. Many of the servants were up and clustered on the landing; the younger women shrieking vaguely, and the ayah making a shrill unearthly noise like nothing I had ever heard before; and with all this, groans and half-stifled screams from Kate's room, and the dogs barking furiously.

We rushed into the room; and I can scarcely tell you what we saw. Everything was in a dreadful state; the silver, about which there had been so much dispute, was strewed about the floor; there had evidently been a tremendous struggle, for chairs and tables were knocked down, and the bed-curtains were torn; on the bed lay Kate, with a handkerchief round her neck and mouth, nearly strangled; on the floor was Davie, pale and covered with blood—he had been stabbed. But he was not dead, only insensible, and dying. The bedroom window was wide open, and Ross was nowhere to be seen. All the other servants were there; our own, and Said, and the ayah; but the new man was not to be found. Davie could tell us nothing, neither what he was doing there in Kate's room, nor what was the meaning of the struggle, nor yet who had stabbed him. Kate would not speak; all she would say was, "It was not Moffat who came to rob me."

But the next day, when the local inspector came to the house to inquire into matters, and when, immediately after him, a detective arrived from London with a warrant for the apprehension of John Hard, alias Ross, for robbery and all sorts of crimes, it seemed to make itself clear to these men at all events. It was evidently a robbery, they said, planned before his flight. He had probably received a hint that he had been tracked—and the servants said they noticed how long he was talking to a beggar woman in the garden, late in the evening—and thought he "would make a good thing of it, and bolt."

As for the old man—and here they looked as if they could see further into dear Davie's character than we could, who had known him all our lives—if indeed he was quite incapable of having a hand in the robbery, he had probably heard something which had roused his suspicions, and had gone to see what it meant.

To which Kate said, for her quite earnestly, "I should think that must have been the case. I do not for a moment believe that Moffat had any hand in the intended robbery."

"If you had said that he had, Kate, you would have deserved to have been strangled outright, instead of being saved by him at the sacrifice of his own life!" said I, bursting into a passion of tears like nothing I have ever known before or since.

From this time Kate entirely changed. The dreadful scene she had gone through, and the danger she had run, seemed to have shaken her nerves so that she could not steady herself. She was continually in hysterics, and would not be left alone for a moment. She clung to us as if we had been her real sisters, and became as nice and good as she had been unfriendly before. But we had lost our Davie, our friend, our protector, in her service! We had bought her at a heavy cost, dear Charlie's wife though she was. So the quarrel was made up over our faithful servant's grave, and we remained at the old Hall as the Lombes should. And the boys are growing up dear loves and great beauties, and do not now call us pigs, or ugly old women. Dear Davie! dear old man! It was through him, after all, that we got back our home. Heaven rest his soul!

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THE ROSE AND THE KEY.

CHAPTER XXIII. THE PARTY AT ROYDON HALL.

COLDLY handsome, an hour later, looked Lady Vernon, at the head of her table, with old Lord Verney beside her. Lord Barroden and her other guests, who had assisted at the legal consultation, were also of the party. The Dean of East Copely was there, very natty in his silk stockings, and apron, and buckles, and Sir Thomas Grummelston, Lady Grummelston, and Miss Grummelston, with several others who had attended the unveiling of the statue and the bishop's sermon.

Lady Vernon was never very gay; but she was this evening more than usually conversable and animated.

"What an admirable sermon the bishop gave us to-day," remarked the Dean of East Copely. "He always preaches well, I need not say; but to-day there was so much feeling; it really was, even for him, an unusually fine sermon. Didn't it so strike you, Lord Verney?"

"I have had," said Lord Verney, looking across the table with his dull grey eyes solemnly upon the dean, "the advantage, Mr. Dean, of listening to the bishop of your diocese, in, as we say, another place. But I had been applying my mind to-day, I may say, to business a good deal, and although I have, people say, rather a facility of getting through business and things——"

Lord Verney's dull eyes at this moment had wandered to the bald head, flushed pink with champagne, of his attorney, Mr. Larkin, who instantaneously closed his eyes and shook his tall head with a mysterious smile, and murmured to the dean at his side:

"I wish I had his lordship's faculty; it would be an easy thousand a year in my pocket!" Which graceful little aside Lord Verney heard, and dropped his eyelids, raising his eyebrows with a slight clearing of his voice, and turning his face more directly towards the dean, suppressed in his own countenance, with an unusual pomp, a tendency to smile at the testimony of the man of business.

"People will form opinions and things, you know; and I was a little tired about it, and so I didn't mind, and I took a walk, and other people, no doubt, heard the bishop preach, and he seems to have gone somewhere."

"I wanted him to take his dinner here," said Lady Vernon, interpreting Lord Verney's rather vague but probable conjecture, "but he could not manage it."

"You were a little tired, also, I fear, Lady Vernon," said Mr. Foljambe. "A great many people, as well as I, were disappointed on missing Lady Vernon from her place."

"I had intended going, but I did feel a little tired; but I made an effort afterwards, though very late, and I glided into our little nook in the gallery without disturbing any one, and I heard the sermon, which I thought very good, and the anthem, which was better than I expected. I like our bishop so much; he's not the least a prig, he's not worldly, he is thoroughly simple—simple as a child; his simplicity is king-like; it is better, it is angelic. He is unconsciously the most dignified man one could imagine; and so kind. I have the greatest respect and affection for him."

"He was a good deal moved to-day," said Mr. Foljambe, leaning back a little grandly. "It is charming, so much sensibility; I saw him shed tears to-day while

he spoke of the early years of Mr. Howard, my predecessor."

Mr. Foljambe blinked a little, as he said this, being always moved by the tears of people of any considerable rank, hereditary or otherwise.

Lord Verney being thus addressed by the stately vicar, whom he assumed to be a man of some mark, made answer a little elaborately.

"Sensibility and all that, I think, very well in its place; but in public speaking—and I hope I have had some little experience, I ought—sensibility, and that kind of very creditable feeling, ought to be managed; there's a way of putting up the pocket-handkerchief about it—all our best speakers do it—to the face, because then, if there *are* tears, and things, the faces they make are so distressing, and, you see, by means of that, it is always managed; I can do it, you can do it, any one may do it, and that is the way it is prevented."

"Very true," said Mr. Foljambe, thoughtfully nodding, as he helped himself to a new entrée, a something aux truffes, which piqued his curiosity; "one learns something every day one lives."

"You don't, of course, recollect Mr. Howard very distinctly, Lady Vernon?" inquired the Dean of East Copely.

"Perfectly — I was twenty when he died."

"A plain man, I should say, judging from that statue?" inferred the dean.

"He was not that—no—he had a very agreeable countenance, and his features were well-formed—his forehead particularly fine," she replied.

"His opinions were, I've been told, very unsettled indeed," said the dean.

"It did not appear from his preaching, then. It was admired and approved, and the then bishop was not a man to permit any trifling with doctrine, any more than the present," answered Lady Vernon. "Mr. Howard was very much beloved, and a most able teacher—his influence was extraordinary in this parish—I am speaking, of course, upon hearsay a good deal, for at that time I did not attend as much as I ought to such things, and my father was still living."

"Mr. Howard was, I believe, very highly connected?" said the dean.

"Quite so," answered Mr. Foljambe. "In fact, as far back as we can go, there was Chevenix, and then Craven, and Vernon, one of this house; and then Percy, one of the old Percys, and Dormer, and Stanley, and Bulkely, and Howard; and, in fact, it is really quite curious!—the people here do seem always to have liked to be taken care of by gentlemen," said Mr. Foljambe, grandly.

"I can't see that there is anything very curious in that," said Lord Verney. "I can't concede that. One naturally asks oneself the question, why should not a gentleman be preferred? And one answers, he should be preferred, because he is naturally superior to persons who are inferior to him; and we know he has certain principles and things that all gentlemen have, about it, and that, I conjecture, will always account for gentlemen, and things, being considered in that sort of light."

"I entirely concur," said Mr. Foljambe, who always concurred with peers. "I only meant that it is a little curious that the vicarage of Roydon should have been always filled by a person of that stamp."

"That is what I have been, I hope, endeavouring to say, or, rather, what I have not said, because I have endeavoured to say something different; in fact, that it is *not* curious. I'll take some sherry, about it." The concluding remark was addressed to the butler.

And so the conversation proceeded very agreeably.

But—

> Pleasures are like poppies spread,
> You pluck the flower, its bloom is shed.

The most agreeable dinner-party, its cutlets and conversation, its wit and its château-yquem, are transitory, and the hour inevitably arrives when people prefer their night-caps and the extinguisher.

Lord Verney has uttered his last wise and lucid exposition for the evening, and the stately vicar, who would not object to a visit to Lord Verney's hospitable house at Ware, has imbibed his latest draughts from that fountain of illumination. Lord Barroden has said his say to Lady Vernon, and enlivened by a nap, has made some agreeable sallies in conversation with Lady Grummelston, and to that happy lady, in the drawing-room, Mrs. Foljambe has told her story about the two young women in whom she took an interest, who left Roydon and set up a confectioner's shop in Coventry, and prospered.

The pleasures of that festive evening are over; and Miss Max and Miss Vernon are having their little chat together, in their dressing-gowns.

Miss Max has a little bit of fire in her grate, for this is, thanks to our variable

climate, by no means like last night; not at all sultry, rather chilly, on the contrary.

"Well, we shall soon hear something, I fancy, about mamma's annual trip to town," says Maud, speaking from a very low-cushioned chair, in a corner of which she is nestled, with her feet on the fender.

The young lady's dressing-gown is of rose-coloured cashmere, some of the quilted silk lining of which, in her careless pose, appears. She is extremely pretty, looking up from her cushioned nook at the old lady, who sits, in her odd flannel garb, before the fire in a more formal arm-chair.

"And why do you think so? Have you heard anything?" asks the old lady.

"Only that Jones says that Latimer is making the usual preparations," answers Miss Maud.

"Latimer's her maid, I suppose?"

"Yes."

"And why doesn't she ask Latimer directly?" demanded Miss Max.

"Because Latimer would be afraid to tell, and she would be afraid to ask. Mamma finds out everything she chooses to find out. You don't know mamma as well as I do in this house. Whatever she chooses to be secret is secret, and whatever she chooses to know she does know; and the servants are awfully afraid of her. You might as well ask that picture as Latimer; and Jones would not be such a fool as to ask her, for she does not know the moment mamma might say, 'Latimer, has any one been asking you anything about my going to London?' and so sure as she did, Latimer would tell her the truth, for there is no fault she is so summary upon as a falsehood; and the servants think that she somehow knows everything."

"Well, at all events, Jones thinks she is going in a week?" says Miss Max.

"Yes. Do you know what Mr. Coke said to me to-day?"

"No. What?" says Miss Max, looking drowsily into the fire.

"He said he thought, or had reason to think, or something of that kind, that mamma is going to marry."

Miss Max turned, with a start, and looked for a few silent moments at Maud.

"Are you sure?"

"Perfectly sure."

"Well, that is very odd. Do you know, I've been thinking that, this long time. Did he say why he thought so?"

"No."

"Nor who the person is?"

"No; nothing. He only said that, and he looked very sly and mysterious."

"Mr. Coke is a very shrewd man. I don't think he had heard before of your mamma's excursions, and when I told him to-day I saw that his mind was working on what I said, and I suspect he has connected something he may have learned from a different source with what I told him, and has put the whole case together, and formed his conclusions. I wonder you did not make him tell you all he knew. I wish he had said so much to me. I should have made him say a great deal more, I promise you."

"He talks to me as if I were a child, and it came so much by surprise, and really I don't think I could have asked him one word about it; I felt so insulted somehow, and disgusted."

"Suppose she has fallen in love with some one of whom, for some reason or other, she is a little ashamed, and suppose there is an engagement? I don't understand it. I have been suspecting something for some time, and I did not like to say so, but you see it has struck Mr. Coke the same way. If it is that, there is a disparity of some kind you may be sure."

"I dare say. I don't care," says the young lady, who looks, nevertheless, as if she did care very much. "I shall have as much money as I want. Mr. Coke said I should have ten thousand a year, and I should go and live with you. You would take me in. Here nothing on earth should induce me to remain. People have told me she merely took a fancy to papa, soon grew tired of him, and ended by disliking him. But I shan't stay here to see his place filled and his memory insulted, and to be hectored and ordered about by some low man."

"I shall be only too glad to have you at any time as long as you will stay with me. But don't be in too great a hurry. You are assuming a great deal; and even if she does marry, it may turn out very differently; and you know, my dear, widows will marry without intending any particular affront to the memory of their first husbands."

"It is not a pleasant home to me as it is," says the young lady, glancing fiercely along the hearth; "but if this takes place I shan't stay here to see it; that I am resolved on."

"In about a week she'll go, Jones thinks?" asks Miss Max. "I have grown very curious. I should like to see what sort of swain she has chosen. You never

know what fancy a woman may take. He may be a very third-rate man. I was thinking he may possibly be in the army. Mrs. Stonix swears she saw her alone in Chatham last year. But it is growing awfully late. Good-night. We'll get to our beds and dream it over."

CHAPTER XXIV. A GENTLEMAN IN BLACK.

They had both risen preparatory to Miss Maud's flitting and a parting kiss and good-night, when Miss Max said, suddenly:

"And what about Mr. Marston?"

"Well, what about him?" answered Miss Vernon, a little crossly, for she had not recovered the conversation that had just occurred.

"Nothing very particular—nothing at all, in fact—only I had intended talking about him fifty times to-day, and something always prevented. He's coming to the ball at Wymering, isn't he?"

"I don't know; he said so. I don't care," said the handsome girl, drowsily. And she advanced her hand and her lips a little, as if for her final salutation.

But Miss Max had not quite done.

"I like him so much. I think him so clever, and so good-natured, and so nice. I wish so much, Maud, that you and he were married," said Miss Max, with audacious directness.

"And I wish so much that you and he were married," retorted Maud, looking lazily at the flame of her bedroom candle, which she held in her hand. "That would be a more natural consequence, I think, of your liking and admiring."

"You can't deny that he is wildly in love with you," said Miss Max.

"I can't deny that he was perhaps wildly in love with a poor seamstress in a dark serge dress a few days ago, and may possibly be in love with another to-day. That is wildly in love, as you say. I don't think there is anything very flattering in being the object of that kind of folly."

"Well, he will be a good deal surprised, I venture to say, when he comes in quest of his seamstress to the Wymering cloak-room," remarked Miss Max, with a pleasant anticipation of the éclaircissement.

"That depends on two things: first, how his seamstress meets him; and, secondly, whether she meets him there at all. Good-night. It is very late."

And with these words she kissed her genial old friend, and was gone.

Miss Max looked after her, and shook her head with a smile.

"There goes impracticability itself!" she says, and throws up her hands and eyes with a shrug. "I pity that poor young man; Heaven only knows what's in store for him. I shall engage in no more vagaries at all events. What an old fool I was to join in that madcap project of rambling over the country and concealing our names! What will Mr. Marston think of us?"

When she laid her busy, rheumatic little head, bound up in its queer night-cap, on her pillow, it began at once to construct all manner of situations and pictures.

Here was a romance in a delightful state of confusion! On this case her head may work all night long, for a year, without a chance of exhausting its fertile problems; for it presents what the doctors call a complication. Barbara Vernon, with her whole heart, hates the Warhamptons; and the Warhamptons, with all theirs, detest Barbara Vernon. It is too long a story to tell all the aggressions and reprisals which have carried the feud to the internecine point.

"I must certainly tell Maud. I'll tell her in the morning," thought Miss Max. "It's only fair."

Perhaps this incorrigible old match-maker fancied that it might not prejudice Mr. Marston if Maud knew that her mother had placed him under anathema.

By noon next day Lord Verney and Lord Barroden, and their attorneys, had taken flight, and Miss Maximilla Medwyn had gone on to see friends at Naunton, with an uncertain promise of returning in a day or two to Roydon Hall.

There is no life in that grand house but the phantom life on its pictured walls. The hour is dull for Maud, who sits listlessly looking from one of the great drawing-room windows. Lady Vernon, who has seen, in succession, two deputations in the library, returns, and in stately silence sits down and resumes her examination of a series of letters from the late Bishop of Rotherham, and notes them for transmission to Mr. Coke.

Maud changes her posture, and glances at her mother. Why is there never any love in the cold elegance of that face? Why can't she make up her mind and be patient? The throb of life will as soon visit that marble statue of Joan of Arc, by the door; Psyche at the other side, in her chill beauty, will as easily glow and soften into flesh.

Miss Vernon leans on her hand, listless, gloomy—in a degree indignant.

The room is darkening. The darker the better, she thinks. It is no metaphoric, but a real darkness; for clouds portending thunder, or heavy rain or hail, have, on a sudden, overcast the sky, and are growing thicker.

The light is dying out, the shadow blackens on Lady Vernon's letters; she raises her eyes. One can hardly see to read.

Lady Vernon lays her letter on the table. She can no longer see the features of the Titian over the door, and the marble statues at either side have faded into vague white drifts. Some heavy, perpendicular drops fall, plashing on the smooth flags outside the window, and the melancholy rumble of distant thunder booms, followed by a momentarily aggravated down-pour, and a sudden thickening of the darkness.

This was a rather sublime prelude to the footman's voice, announcing:

"Mr. Dawe."

Maud glanced toward the door, which was in obscurity, and then at Lady Vernon, who, sitting full in the light of the window, had turned, with a stare and a frown, as if she had heard something incredible and unwelcome, toward the person who was entering.

By no means an heroic figure, nor worthy of being heralded by thunder, has stepped in somewhat slowly and stiffly, and halts in the side-light of the window, relieved by the dark background. It is a small man, dark visaged, with a black wig, a grave, dull, mahogany face, furrowed with lines of reserve. Maud is certain that she never saw that small, insignificant-looking man before, who is staring with a very grave but not unfriendly countenance at her mother.

He is buttoned up in a black outside coat, with a cape to it; he holds a rather low-crowned hat in his hand, and wears those shining leather coverings for the legs, which are buckled up to the knees. Getting in and getting out of his posting carriage he has scrupulously avoided dust or mud. His boots are without a speck. His queer hat is nattily brushed, and, in stable phraseology, has not a hair turned. His black coat is the finest possible, but it has great pockets at either side, each of which seems laden with papers, mufflers, and other things, so that his hips seem to descend gradually, and culminate near his knees.

This man's brown face, smoothly shaved, is furrowed and solemn enough for five-and-sixty. In his dress and air there is nothing of the careless queerness of a country gentleman. His singularities suggest rather the eccentricity of a precise and rich old city humorist.

There is something characteristic and queer enough, in the buttoned-up and black-wigged little man, to interest Maud's curiosity.

He has not been ten seconds in the room, and stands poised on his leather-cased legs, looking gravely and quietly at Lady Vernon, and, like a ghost, says nothing till he is spoken to. One can reckon the tick, tick, tick of the Louis Quatorze clock on the bracket by the chimney-piece.

Lady Vernon stood up with an effort, still looking hard at him, and advancing a step, she said:

"Mr. Dawe? I'm so surprised. I could scarcely believe my ears. It is such an age since I have seen you here."

And she put out her hand hospitably, and he took it in his brown old fingers, with the stiffness of a mummy, and as he shook it slightly, he said in his wooden tones, quietly:

"Yes, it is sixteen years and eight months. I was looking into my notes yesterday—sixteen years on the eighteenth of November last. You look well, Barbara. Your looks are not much altered; no—considering."

"It is very good of you to come to see me; you mustn't stay away so long again," she replied in her silvery tones.

"This is your daughter?" he interrupted with a little wave of his dark, thin hand towards the young lady.

"Yes, that is she. Maud, shake hands with Mr. Dawe."

"Maud Guendoline she was baptised," he said, as he advanced two stiff steps toward her, with his small but prominent brown eyes fixed upon her. She rose and placed her pretty fingers on that hand of box-wood, which closed on them.

CHAPTER XXV. THE COUNTY PAPER.

When he had inspected her features for a time, he turned to her mother and spoke.

"Not like her father," he said, still holding her hand.

"Don't you think so?" answered Lady Vernon, coldly. "I can see a look—very decidedly."

Maud was wondering all this time who this Mr. Dawe could be, who seemed to assert a sort of dry intimacy with Lady Vernon and her family, very unusual in the girl's experience.

"I think it is more than a look. I think her extremely like him," insisted Lady Vernon, resuming in the same cold tone, and without looking at Maud, as if she had that resemblance by heart, and did not like it.

"She has some of the family beauty, wherever she got it," said Mr. Dawe, deliberately, in his hard quiet tones, and he let go her hand and turned away his inflexible face and brown eyes, a good deal to the young lady's relief.

Lady Vernon was still standing. She did not usually receive such guests standing. There was a hectic red in each cheek, also unusual, except when she was angry, and she had not been angry.

"Her eyes resemble yours," said Mr. Dawe.

"Oh, no. Perhaps, indeed, the colour; but mere colour is not a resemblance," answered Lady Vernon, with a cold little laugh, that, in Maud's ear, rang with cruelty and disdain. "No, Maud's good looks are all her own. She doesn't, I think, resemble me in any one particular—not the least."

Maud was wounded. She felt that tears were rising to her eyes. But her pride suppressed them.

"H'm!" Mr. Dawe hummed with closed lips.

"Of course, Mr. Dawe, you are come to stay a little? It is so long since you have been here."

"I'm not so sure about staying. It is a long time — sixteen years and upwards. You have been well; you have been spared, and your daughter, and I. We have all reason to be grateful to the Almighty. Time is so important, and eternity so long!"

"Very true," she said, with a deep sigh, "and death so irremediable."

Mr. Dawe took his big silver snuff-box from his coat-pocket, and tapped it. He nodded, in acquiescence in the sentiment, leaned a little forward, and took a large pinch, twiddling his fingers afterwards, to get rid of any snuff that might remain on their tips. Perhaps the little superfluous shower that fell to the carpet suggested unconsciously his funeral commentary.

"H'm! Dust to dust."

Whereupon he applied his Indian silk handkerchief, not to his eyes, but lightly to his nose.

"By-and-bye, I shall have a word to say to you," he said, with a solemn roll of his brown eyes.

She looked hard at him, though with a half flinching gaze, as if to read the character of his news. But the solemn reserve of his wooden face never changed.

"We shall be quite to ourselves in the library," she said.

"Then suppose we go there now."

"Very well; let us go," she said, and led the way.

At the door he made, with his stiff backbone, a little inclination to Miss Maud.

The door closes, and the young lady is left to herself, with matter for speculation to amuse her.

Quite alone in that vast and magnificent room, she looks wearily round. The care of Mr. Tarpey, on whom devolves the arrangement of flowers and of newspapers, has spread a table in a corner near the window with these latter luxuries.

Maud looks out; the rain is still tumbling continuously, and plashing heavily, though the sky looks lighter. She turns her eyes on the newspapers, and goes over to the table, and looks down upon them with listless eyes.

She carelessly plucks the county paper from among its companions, and in that garrulous and homely broad-sheet a paragraph catches her suddenly earnest eye. She reads it twice. The annual Wymering ball is to come off three weeks earlier than usual. She takes the paper to the window and reads it again. There is no mistake about it. "Three weeks earlier than the accustomed day!" There is an unusual colour in her cheeks, and a lustre in her eyes. She fancies, as she muses, that she hears a step in the passage, and she drops the paper. She is afraid of Lady Vernon's all-seeing gaze, and the dreadful question, "Have you seen anything unusual in the paper? Allow me to look at it." And she feels that her face would proclaim, to all who cared to look, that the Wymering ball was to take place three weeks earlier than usual.

No one is coming, however. She hastens to replace the paper on the table, and she sits down, with a beautiful flush, determined to think.

She does not think very logically, or very much in train, and the effort subsides in a reverie.

Well, what is to be done now? The crisis has taken her by surprise; then fancy leads her into the assembly-room at Wymering. There are lights, and fiddles, and—oh, such a strange meeting!

Cousin Max must be with her. With that spirited veteran by her side she would fear nothing.

Very glad she was when one of Lady Vernon's broughams drove up to the door a few minutes later.

In that great house you cannot get as quickly to the hall as, on occasions like this, you may wish. But Maud overtakes her at the foot of the stairs, as in her cloak and bonnet Maximilla Medwyn is about to ascend to her own room.

"Mamma is in the library; and there are three men, with ill-made clothes and lank hair, a deputation, as usual, waiting in the shield-room to talk to her about a meeting-house at Heppsborough; and two clergymen are waiting in the blue drawing-room, to see her afterwards about plate for the church of Saint Hilary. So you and I shall be very much to ourselves for a time; and do you know we have had a new arrival—a guest. I dare say you know him. Such an odd little figure, as solemn as a conjurer. His name is Dawe."

"Dawe? Why, for goodness sake, has Richard Dawe appeared again?" exclaims Miss Max, stopping on the stair, and leaning with her back against the massive banister in great surprise.

"His name is certainly Dawe, and I'll tell you what he's like."

And forthwith Maud describes him.

"Oh! there's no mistaking the picture," cries Miss Max; and then she is taken with a fit of laughing, very mysterious to Miss Maud.

Recovering a little, she continues:

"Mr. Dawe? We were very good friends. I like him—at least, all I could ever know of him in twenty years. He keeps his thoughts to himself a good deal. I don't think any one else in the world had half his influence with your poor grandpapa; but, certainly, I never expected to see him here during Barbara's reign. My dear! I thought she hated him. He was the only person who used to tell her, and in the simplest language, what he thought of her. Have they been fighting yet?"

"No, I think not—that is, they had not time. I don't know I'm sure what may be going on now."

"Where are they?"

"In the library," says Maud.

"I think he is the only person on earth she ever was the least afraid of. I wonder what he can have to say or do here. He has never been inside this door since—yes, he did come once, for a day or two, a few years after your poor papa's death, and that, I think, was simply because he had some direction of your grandfather's, about the Roydon vault, which he had promised to see carried out; but, except then, he has never once been here, till now, since your poor grandpapa's death."

"How did he come to have such an influence here?" asked Maud.

They had resumed their ascent, and were walking up the stairs, side by side.

"I believe he understands business very well, and he is, I fancy, the best keeper of a secret on earth. His influence with your grandpapa increased immensely toward the close of his life; and he knew he could talk to him safely about that wonderful will of his."

"I wonder he allowed him to make that troublesome will," said Maud.

Miss Max laughed.

"I said the very same thing to him once, and he answered that he could not dissuade him, but that he had prevented a great deal. So, here we are."

The latter exclamation accompanied her entrance into her room.

Maud was more curious than ever.

"He's not the kind of person, then, who would have come here, under all the circumstances, without good reason," she said.

"Not he. He has a reason—a strong one, you may be very sure of that. It is very odd. I can't imagine what it can possibly be about. Well, leave him to me. I think he's franker with me than with any one else; and I'll get it from him, one way or other, before he goes. You'll see."

In this sanguine mood Miss Maximilla Medwyn put off her things, and prepared very happily for luncheon.

Mr. Dawe and Lady Vernon are, in the mean time, holding a rather singular conference.

INSTITUTIONS.

Institutions, like ghosts and policemen, are things more often talked about than seen. What is an institution? Where is the learned Dryasdust who has catalogued, ticketed, and classified what we choose to designate by that familiar four-syllabled word that runs so trippingly off the tongue? Everyone can speak of an institution, but it would be amusing to watch the struggles of even a trained logician to define one. How is he to bind Proteus with his clumsy syllogisms? The slippery creature eludes his grasp, changing form, and shape, and size, like the rival magicians in the Eastern

tale, utterly refusing to be caught and handcuffed and exhibited to the public gaze.

What is an institution? Harmodius J.P. Pell, of Syracuse City, Pa., would tell us, perhaps, that institutions meant whittling and iced water, a brandy-smash at the bar, and a trotting match in spidery vehicles on Philadelphia Course. In Arkansas, the most cherished institutions are playing-cards and plug tobacco; in Missouri, six-shooters and bowie-knives. A merry-go-round, with smartly caparisoned hobby-horses, spangles, flags, and a squeaking trumpet to enliven the infant riders as they spin round, is the nearest approach to an institution that young—very young—Paris knows. His elder brother believes—despite of siege and famine—in nothing so firmly as in the glittering cafés and asphalte trottoirs of the boulevards, and considers that nothing short of a cataclysm could prevent him from sipping his absinthe among the little marble-topped tables of the Muscadin Elysium. And if a travelling Briton of average education were to be peremptorily cross-examined as to the nature of our English institutions, it is doubtful if he would get far beyond the well-known palladia of our liberties, and whether trial by jury, the Derby Day, with Habeas Corpus, and a volunteer review, would not prove to be the handful of grain extracted from an enormous amount of chaff. It would be better, perhaps, at once to give up the useless attempt at exact definition. An archdeacon has been gravely declared to be a person who exercises archidiaconal functions. And on the same principle we may safely describe an institution as something which has been instituted—never mind how.

The very word institution is of fire-new modern coinage. Certainly, it was a phrase unknown to the wisdom of our ancestors. They fought for the Church. They rallied round the Throne. They did battle for Magna Charta and the liberties of England. But they never proclaimed themselves resolved to fight to the death for the sake of an institution, as such. Even the country squires who seventy years ago announced their readiness to die pro aris et focis, for the hares and foxes, as Sheridan wickedly construed their Latinity, would have been disgusted with so vague a name for things which they held dear and sacred.

But the actual institution, if not the name of it, is immemorial, and few tasks could be more difficult than to lay a finger on the methods by which it arose. It would often be found, no doubt, that the growth of some custom or privilege that has struck its roots so deeply into the earth as almost to defy external violence, and which overshadows a realm with its wide-spreading branches, has begun very humbly, and perhaps from an apparent accident. An institution is often self-sown. And the toughest and longest-lived of the species are such as have had their origin in some seeming blunder or trifling incident. Very few have been successfully created by deliberate legislation, although the law-maker has constantly stepped in to back by legal sanctions the imperious decrees of habit and opinion.

But if it be true that institutions seldom spring into life, like Minerva, full-grown and armed at all points, it must be owned that nothing is easier than to scatter the seeds of what may, if it fall on fertile ground, be prolific of much good or of gigantic evil in the future. A bequest in a rich man's will, a philosophical treatise, a speech or a sermon, possibly a few burning lines in a poem, or a strong passage in a novel, may produce consequences that outlive the reputation of the author, the preacher, or the testator. There are dead men whose names would sound strangely to us, and yet whose voices we hearken to at fiftieth-hand, as it were, and whose uttered thoughts help to shape and sway a world that has forgotten them personally.

Sometimes the intentions of a founder are so very different to the results that spring from his acts, that his name comes down to us as being associated with doctrines or practices at which he would himself have stood aghast. That of Loyola, for instance, is in the popular imagination inextricably mixed up with the doings and sayings, the stern discipline, the artful casuistry, and the ill report of the too famous Order which he established. And yet, if history holds up a true mirror, it gives us back Loyola's image as that of a single-minded enthusiast, a reformed rake, and a hot-headed fanatic. If this poor Spanish captain, as he limped from one Roman shrine to another during the Easter sermons, waving his tattered hat in applause of the more vehement preachers, could but have known how tremendous was the agency he was about to evoke, it is likely that he would have heard the tidings with honest dismay. There was surely more of the dove than of the serpent in the man who is immortalised as the earliest general of the Jesuits.

Fairs, as they were and as they are, afford a familiar instance of the gradual warping of an institution valuable in its day. A fair at the present time means a licensed assemblage of ruffianry and rabbledom; means noise, drunkenness, robbery, rioting, silly tumult, and gross vice, unrelieved by any of that harmless mirth and genuine clownish curiosity, of which the old poets and chroniclers were wont to tell. These gatherings, sinking from bad to worse, are every year growing beautifully less. Ere long, doubtless, the last of them will be improved off the face of the earth by magisterial prohibition. There will be no more gilt ginger-bread, no more dancing-booths. The last penny whistle and the last wooden back-scratcher will be sent in company to the South Kensington Museum, and the Patagonian giantess and the Sicilian dwarf, the performing fish and the fat girl, will pass into the limbo of forgotten monstrosities. But before the last of these assemblies shall come to an end, lamented only by beersellers and pick-pockets, it may be as well to compare its present decadence with its bygone period of glory and usefulness.

Fairs, indeed, were once very useful. When roads were bad and unsafe, when war was chronic and robbery perennial, when the plague hung out its black banner in most cities every score of years or so, it was no light motive that could tempt a trader to plod, with his strings of pack-horses, along tracks that a few days of wet weather would convert into quagmires. There were bridgeless rivers to be forded; there were tolls to be paid, here to a robber baron, there to my lord the abbot, and here again to the jealous corporation of a township. There was risk of dangerous floods, risk of pestilence, drought, and dearth, risk from the broken soldiers and banditti, whom every campaign left prowling like wolves about the country. To travel was at once most costly, laborious, and full of peril. A roving merchant had to feed a whole caravan of men, horses, and mules. And, even then, so slow a process was that of journeying, that the Venetian or the Flemish trafficker might set off towards a distant market, and when he got to the end of his weary route might find the city in which he meant to trade beleaguered, or the road blocked by hostile armies, and would be thankful to escape, with much loss to goods and gear. Fairs, however, were in a manner sacred. Charters, and patents, and the goodwill of all rulers, lay and clerical, smoothed the road for those who attended them, whether to buy or sell. The very outlaw, beyond the State's protecting pale at other times, had his safe-conduct at fair time, and could walk the streets unharmed.

A fair of the old sort rose in the middle ages to the dignity of a national benefit. Then, and then only, could the petty dealers of the burghs, and the wealthier merchants of the cities, replenish their stores with foreign goods—the very words, foreign and foreigner, by the way, being derived from those occasions, when the "forain" folk came with their wares to the foire or fair. Then, and only then, could the rustics of Yorkshire, or Westphalia, or Provence, see spread before their eyes the glossy cloths of Flanders, the glistening silks brought from the Levant in Genoese galleys, furs of Muscovy, and spices from the far East, the dainty carpets of Ypres, and the unrivalled mirrors of Venice. Every large fair was incomparably more interesting to our forefathers than a great exhibition could possibly be to us. It was there that the cavalier bought his sword of Toledo steel, his plumed hat, and scarlet cloak of Spanish or of Lombard make. There, too, the boor could cheapen his Sheffield whittle or his Ghent wood-axe, and there careful housewives laid in their stock of napery and laces, and the wool and flax that were to keep the spinning-wheel busy through many a long winter's eve. The damsel waited eagerly for the fair, not only because gay ribbons, and kirtles, and trinkets would glitter in fifty booths, but because that was the annual opportunity of learning the fashions of the new apparel worn by grand ladies at the far-off royal court. Even the sufferer from toothache, or the invalid whom simples could not cure, longed for the fair, when travelling dentists and blood-letters, and grave doctors of medicine in furred robes, would come to minister in public to the ills that flesh is heir to.

What a fair was, the great gatherings of Nishni-Novgorod and Leipzig, and even the South of France fair of Beaudecaire, though shorn of their glories, and paling fast before the competition of shops, survive to show us. There the crush, the clamour, the excitement, recal the occasional outbursts of energy that broke the dull, slow-thinking monotony of mediæval existence. Under their acres of canvas and wooden booths are yet exchanged, wholesale and retail, the shawls, and scarfs, and gold

and silver filigrees of Tangiers and Teheran, of Bokhara and Bagdad, for the cutlery of Sheffield, the fire-arms of Liege, the sables of Russia, and the frippery that Paris claims as essentially her own. There the bearded trader of Kiew or Archangel meets the turbaned merchant, whose camels have made the long journey from Khiva or from Kashgand. There the Seville cigar-seller, in his silver-buttoned jacket and striped Moorish mantle, sets up his stall beside that at which a venerable Turk offers the amber beads and mouthpieces, the embossed yataghans and gorgeous slippers, of Stamboul or of Broussa. An English commercial traveller, clean-shaven, and pert as a London sparrow, is selling Birmingham penknives and Leeds broadcloth in close proximity to a Polish Jew, whose gabardine is deeply incrusted with ancestral grease and dirt, and whose wares are sheepskins and corn-brandy.

No doubt, at best, a fair, sanctioned by the charters of kings, and encouraged by the presence and the smiles of my lord the count and my lady the countess, to say nothing of the approval of bishop and prior, mayor and aldermen, was not an unmixed blessing to any town. Along with commerce and the arts came ill examples and evil teachings. It was not only the limner, ready to take children's portraits, or to paint a fair altar-piece for the village church; it was not only the mender of crockery, the leech, the smith, the travelling tailor, and the barber-surgeon, who flocked to the fair. With these came the charlatan, the cutpurse, the gambler with his loaded dice and marked cards, the crop-eared passer-off of base coin, and the scowling bully, with a shirt of mail beneath his doublet. Along with the juggler, whose simple feats in sword-swallowing and ball-tossing made the villagers gape in rustic wonder; on the heels of the strolling players, whose performance in a barn made the link between the times of Thespis and those of Shakespeare—came much worse speculators on the credulity and passions of their audience. All the cunning and fraud of middle-aged Christendom came to a fair as to a spoil, and rely on it that it went hard, sometimes, with a "young man from the country," among the accomplished practitioners, who had learned their wickedness in London, and Milan, and rich Rome, and brawling Paris. Presently the glaring faults of these worn-out institutions came to outweigh their merits, and so we gradually get round to the time when fairs are presented as nuisances at quarter sessions, and are put down piecemeal as scandalous anachronisms no longer to be tolerated.

A curious institution that starts into existence in countries inhabited by our own Teutonic race, is that of volunteer courts of justice. We Anglo-Saxons are—as, for that matter, are also our cousins of Holland and our High Dutch and Scandinavian kinsmen—a law-fearing people. Only it must be law that we fear. The downright arbitrary ukase of a master, the writ "de par le roi," before which France cowered, never obtained in this our island, nor had any emperor north of the Rhine the personal power which the Bourbon kings had south of it. But a lawful authority has always been obeyed among us, and when, from any cause, lawful authority has been asleep, an extra-legal deputy has commonly started up to fill the vacant place. The most notable instance of this is the Vehmgericht, which, for three centuries, exercised unquestioned sway over West and South Germany. The princes, lay and ecclesiastical, were too weak or too careless to do justice, the feudal nobles were the scourge of the country, the forests were full of outlaws, the roads of thieves, and the courts of justice were mere mockeries. At this pinch there arose the free-judge, from whose far-reaching arm there was no escape; a judge not to be bribed, not to be intimidated, working in darkness, but dealing out a rude, substantial, irresistible justice. There are few grander conceptions than that of the dread which this viewless tribunal, the sentences of which were carried out as by mystic agency, inspired among the wrong-doers of an age that set brute force and military prowess on a pedestal for worship, and in which equal rights were scoffed at by the strong.

The same spirit, that in the Germany of the dark ages supplemented the inertness of the law, has shown itself in the far west of America. California and Colorado are wild and bad enough, but they would have been uninhabitable had it not been for the pitiless justice of Lynch law. There, as on the Rhine of old, triumphant violence produced a terrible reaction, and the blood-stained ruffian, who had thought to make his red right hand the only law, found himself suddenly arraigned before the grim bar of a regulator's court, with the inevitable halter already tightening round his guilty neck. And though in England such unlicensed verdicts have, since the death of Piers Gaveston, been happily out of fashion,

still the accounts of the Porteous riots prove that the harsh captain of the Edinburgh town-guard was tried, condemned, and hanged, by order of a self-constituted tribunal, that would not spare, but that chose to execute its sentence with a fearful deliberation utterly unlike the frenzied impulse of a mere angry mob.

Can anything be prettier than a rosière, as she trips, crowned with white blossoms, herself a human rosebud, along the flower-strewn pathway that leads from the grey old church to her cottage home? Behind her, two and two, walk her young companions, all in pure white, and flinging from their full baskets flowers to right and left, as they go smiling onward. There are the village elders, the silver-haired patriarchs, the good old dames in lace coif and antique ear-rings, beaming approval on the chosen representative of the parochial youth and innocence. There is Monsieur le Curé, in shovel-hat and buckled shoes, the very type of a rustic priest. There are the rural authorities, a corpulent maire in an impossible waistcoat and a brown wig, a good-natured brigadier resplendent in his jack-boots, his gendarme's belt burnished till it glows yellow as a harvest moon, and the captain of the Pompiers in his grotesque helmet. The music plays—bassoon, serpent, cymbals, first and second fiddles, do their melodious best. Boum! boum! goes the big drum, and the children cry huzza! Then there are sugar-plums and sour wine, and dancing in the open air, while Church and State combine to shed their benignant approbation upon the festival of the happy villagers.

Happiest of all is the rosière, the crowned Queen of the May, the Flora of the feast. Besides her unsubstantial honours, she is to receive a very substantial dowry of real ringing five-franc pieces, the genuine silver five-franc pieces, heaviest and hardest of cash, minted in the piping peace times of King Louis Philippe, and of the value of which, in securing a suitable husband in cautious France, not even rosières are ignorant. She is a lucky girl, for this public celebration is to her a perpetual certificate of good character. Through life she will be well esteemed, as witness the mute testimony of the old rosières of bygone years, buxom matrons now, who walk behind her in the pageant, as so many old moons might follow the triumphant march of the young new moon of to-day. Is it not a pretty sight, and did not some old seigneur or lady do well in founding and endowing such an institution for the reward and settlement of the fairest and the best?

Alas, what a falling off there is! The rosière of now-a-days may be, and very likely is, in every respect equal to the rosière of one or two hundred years ago, and the curé and the maire as excellent and single-minded. But the spirit of the show has fled, and the fault doubtless is with the spectators. Those staring tourists, with red Murrays in their hands, those sneering dandies of the Paris boulevards, those reporters for the penny newspapers, are not the right kind of audience before whose unsympathetic eyes rosières should parade. They believe in nothing, they jeer at everything, they hustle, and crowd, and titter, until they put the procession out of countenance. The peasants themselves grow almost ashamed of a ceremony which is received as if it were a theatrical burlesque, and in a few years, no doubt, even at Nanterre itself, the dowry will be given without the exhibition of the village maiden —Hamlet will be performed without the Prince of Denmark.

Does a potato deserve to be called an institution? Humble tuber as it is, it is quite important enough to take such rank, for it has done much to produce an economical revolution in Europe. It has helped to extirpate more than one hideous disease, once common among the rye-eating labourers, from the Wye to the Wolga. A plot of potatoes furnishes the winter provision on which the petty freeholder of France or Belgium relies for the subsistence of his family. To the Irish cottier the lumper is almost as valuable as the bread-fruit to the Polynesian. Yet when Raleigh planted the first potatoes in his garden at Youghal, he could not have dreamed how huge a dish he was filling for the hungry mouths of millions, and as little could he guess that the vegetable he had brought from the Indies of the West would be accused of fostering barbarism and of thwarting improvement.

Is Sir Walter's other transatlantic present to us—tobacco—an institution? Is tea one? The first can claim, like Cæsar, to have come, seen, and conquered in all the quarters of the modern globe. In vain pope, patriarch, and sultan opposed their spiritual censures to the resistless progress of the pipe. In vain the British Solomon penned his Counterblast against the baleful weed. Within a few years tobacco triumphed everywhere, and few ex-

chequers could now endure the depletion that its disuse would cause. And when we think of the gigantic commerce, the frequent wars, and the deeply ingrained national habits that have risen, so to speak, from the fragrant steam of the tea-pot, it needs an effort of faith to realise that not so very long ago the first tea brought from Canton was a mere curiosity, apt to be cooked as spinach by those who got the gift of a packet, and that the China drink was chiefly sipped in the shops of apothecaries. Tea and tobacco have, at any rate, obtained so firm a foothold in the land, that it would take a very amazing autocrat, indeed, to drive them out again.

More picturesque and more legitimate are certain institutions that linger only in a few obscure nooks and corners, shadows of their former selves. The May-pole is laid as low as the bitterest of its Puritan foes could have wished it, but some feeble efforts at celebrating the floral games go on in remote hamlets. Only in a very few places do the parish stocks still gape with their wooden jaws for the imprisoned limbs of topers. The parish bounds are beaten, but not with the antique zest, and the doles of bread-and-meat and raiment are either commuted into small silver, or else the distribution is huddled over, as much out of sight as possible, and as if all parties concerned were thoroughly ashamed of such an old-fashioned fuss about trifles.

But to make a fuss about trifles was the especial characteristic of our ancestors. Perhaps it would be more just to say that there were no such things as trifles to them. Exeter hanged Bardolph without inquiry as to the value of the "pyx of little price." The Recorder of London carted off scores of wretches to Tyburn for such puny thefts as a court of petty sessions would now hesitate to deal with. And, as with the Draconic severity of our forefathers, so with their bounty. Dame Dorothy went to her rest the happier for believing that every Michaelmas and Lady Day, for ever, eight poor old women should, at the church door, receive green gowns, black shoes, and grey cloaks, with "viij pence in money," and ale, meat, and loaves, and should carry candles in procession through the streets, and sing for the repose of their benefactress. It would have shocked Dame Dorothy could she have beheld, with the eye of foreknowledge, the hole-and-corner fashion in which all this green-gown and meat-and-drink business is shuffled through in our degenerate age. It would take many times eightpence to bribe any eight elderly females, "poor but honest," of our day to march singing through the streets with flickering candles in their old hands. After all it is not the fault of an institution that it wears out after many years. It has very likely worked well in its time, and its wisest course would be, in the fulness of age, gracefully to step aside, and leave the stage clear for more youthful and vigorous competitors.

EVENING.

Gold-fringed are the banks of violet cloud,
The heavens' imperial purple: and the sun
Shows through their gorgeous mazes, half-obscured,
Yet gathering grandeur from his hidden might,
As Beauty shines more powerful half-veiled,
Than when 'tis all revealed.
From yon white thorn
The blackcap runs the gamut of his song,
With rival nightingale, the blackbird pipes
From cherry bough, and, from the spruce, the thrush
Joins the blithe evening choir. The apple-blooms
Are scattered roseate o'er the orchard lands;
The white-robed pear, the sweet-breathed damascene,
Weighed down with blossomed fragrance, sprinkle snow
Upon the daisied grass. The buttercups
With golden buttons, gem the homestead mead,
And pale blue squills glint 'neath the tangled wealth
Of fern and bramble. Home the milkmaid trips,
Quick, with sweet-scented pail.
The twilight shades
Merge into mellow gloaming, and the sky
Its purple glories lost, to crimson turns,
And paling then to amber, sinks in night!

PEACE.

There are things which everybody vaunts in theory, but which few people succeed in reducing to practice, and amongst those acknowledged desirabilities I think we may fairly reckon peace. Yet peace, in all its forms and phases, is better known by name than in reality. There are nations whose annals record more years of war, of preparations for war, of recovery from the exhaustion or the disasters of war, than they reckon years free from all thought of hostilities; there are families in which bickerings, jealousies, and disputes, are incessant and continual; there are individuals of so sour a temper that when they have no one else to quarrel with, they seem to take a pleasure in doing their best to pick a quarrel with themselves. It may even be stated that, in this vale of tears, peace is more widely known by its absence than its presence. Not a few unhappy wretches annually rush of their own accord to seek in the grave the peace which they despair to find elsewhere.

And yet what a beautiful thing is peace! The very word is melodious. The Greek

Εἰρήνη, Eireenee is euphony itself, and has quite as good a right to be a favourite Christian name for women as Grace, Blanche, Aurora, Dagmar, and others. The Latin pax is short, sharp, and blunt; but no one cares how abruptly peace is made, even if it turn out only a truce. The Romans, untiring warriors at home, wished their colonies to enjoy peace, at least in name. The chief city of Estremadura, in Spain, was called Pax Augusta, while Portugal had Pax Julia, the Beja of the present day. Ovid raises Pax to the dignity of a goddess. There were coins that bore the effigy of Pacifer Hercules, Hercules the Peacemaker, and we have had only too recent evidence of what a herculean task peacemaking is. The French paix, though directly descended from the Latin pax, looks better on paper, and when pronounced drops the harsh final consonant. The German friede is a delightful dissyllable. Friedereich ought to signify rich in peace, if anything. It has not been the fault of a certain Frederick (Unser Fritz), we are told, if he has not been so in deed as well as in name. May he live to profit by the saying, "Friede ernährt, Unfriede verzehrt," "Peace nourishes, discord devastates."

In some languages, the word peace is employed only in the singular number, and has no plural, as if it might and should be one and indivisible, never broken in two nor rent asunder; as if peace were intended to be, like eternity, uninterrupted, without break or flaw. In English we may speak of treaties of peace, but can we say peaces as the Romans wrote paces? A treaty of peace is named after the place where it is made; thus we have the Treaty of Amiens, which we may also call the Peace of Amiens. We have had the treaties of Munster, which pacified all Germany, and of Ryswick which, in 1697, restored peace to nearly the whole of Europe, but we can hardly call them the Peaces of Munster and of Ryswick.

Peace, as understood with reference to public affairs, means the tranquillity enjoyed by a community, either at home (as in the absence of civil war and intestine discord) or, in its foreign relations, by the good understanding it maintains with neighbouring countries. One would say that peace at home and peace abroad was the normal and healthy condition of every people who value prosperity and pretend to civilisation. Hobbes, however, hazards the notion that war is the natural condition of man, in which every man's hand is against every other man; which grates on one's ear as if he had said that pain and disease, not continued good health, were the natural condition of the human body. War is surely a malady of the body corporate, a dislocation of the joints of society, a fever fit attacking all the members who join in it, a determination of blood, not to the head, but to the slaughter-house. War is the fruit of human depravity, the outbreak of an unsound constitution, a convulsive disorder of the body politic. Witness its symptoms and their results. War thins the population of a country, spreads anarchy throughout its length and breadth, makes license take the place of law, jeopardises property, liberty, and life, obstructs all commerce, or brings it to a standstill, and leaves untilled the wretched fields it has devastated. Will any man in his senses, at the present time of day, talk of glory as the upshot of such a combination of miseries? Perhaps. For, after all, we may be told, "It was a glorious victory!"

Peace, like health, gives strength to empires; and empires may exist without having at their head a conquering hero as their emperor. Peace is the natural state of a nation which can isolate itself from morbid influences, from the infection of rabid oratory, and the feverish vanity of augmented territory. Peace maintains domestic order, gives law the strength necessary for its proper working, favours the increase of population, and encourages trade. Peace makes life a blessing; war almost tempts us to regard it as a curse.

In spite of the proverbs which prove the popular appreciation of peace—the end of a feast is better than the beginning of a fray; the beginnings of strife are like the letting in of waters—peace is a blessing whose full value is not felt until it is lost. Warlike nations show their sense of this by the way in which they symbolise peace. The Greeks figured Peace as a goddess, carrying in her arms the infant Plutus, the god of wealth. Peace thus holds the first beginnings of riches, which will increase if their nurse is suffered to survive. Amongst the Romans, we ordinarily find Peace represented with an olive-branch, sometimes with wings (to denote how easy it is to make her take her flight), holding a caduceus or wand, with which she threatens a serpent (the symbol of evil, mischief, and wickedness) crawling at her feet. The cornucopia, or horn of plenty, is often added as a fitting attribute.

The caduceus is the symbol of the mes-

senger Mercury, to mark the negotiations which have brought about peace. The olive-tree is the symbol of peace. Now it is the permanence of peaceful growth which is indispensable to the olive-tree, to enable it to yield its annual produce. It will not, like the vine or the peach-tree, give its fruit after a few years' culture. It is profitless in a country frequently devastated by war. "Hesiod delivers," wrote Sir Thomas Browne, "that none who planted the olive gathered of the fruit thereof." This corresponds to our "Plant pears, plant for your heirs." Horticultural skill, aided by quince stocks, has been able to do more in hurrying pears than it has in hastening the appearance of olives, whose blossoms take a long, long time to make up their mind to come into the world. This absolute need to live in quiet times, renders the olive-tree a specially apt emblem of peace. Moreover, it was the gift of Minerva, the goddess of wisdom, implying that if fools are pugnacious and rush into broils without knowing how they are to get out of them, wise men think twice before they venture to drag the rope of defiance through a Donnybrook fair.

One of the medals of Antonius Pius represents Peace holding an olive-branch in her right hand, and burning with her left hand bucklers and cuirasses, which, consequently, must have been made of wood, or at least of leather. The idea, if not novel, was at least ingenious; as also was that on the medals of Titus, which figure Peace with an olive-branch in one hand, and with the other leading a lamb and a wolf yoked together.

Peace has a variety of meanings, all offshoots from its one primary signification. There is the king's peace, or the queen's peace; namely, the state of public tranquillity which every good subject is bound to maintain, and breaches of which are punishable by justices of the peace, who are empowered by the law to bind over parties to keep the peace. In this minor sense (though the fact is not of minor importance, for blessed are the peacemakers, of whatever kind) judicious and kindly persons may succeed in making peace between litigious neighbours, quarrelsome husbands and wives, or jealous brethren. Pax, too, in Latin, as in English, means "Peace, be still; hold your tongue;" as if the tongue had really sometimes something to do with stirring up strife.

The peace of God of the middle ages was rather the truce of God, the trêve de Dieu, peace being the cessation of hostilities between belligerent nations, and a truce or trêve the temporary suspension of fighting between individuals at feud with each other. The peace or truce of God was a lull of armed strife, from the Wednesday evening of every week up to Monday morning, enforced by ecclesiastics and the princes of the Church in the times when individuals had the right to kill the murderer of a parent, or to take justice into their own hands in any other case that might turn up in those days of unsettled authority. According to ancient custom, the hall of audience in which justice was administered, was the house of peace. Towns of peace were those in which persons were not allowed to avenge themselves, otherwise than by an appeal to justice, in contradistinction to towns and provinces where they had the right to settle their differences by private warfare.

The peace of God effected, in its day, an enormous amount of good. In feudal times, all Europe was studded with castles, whose owners were constantly at war with one another. The result would have been the ruin of agriculture, the suppression of industry, and the destruction of the population, if the clergy had not been able to diminish the evil; to prevent it entirely was out of their power. In 1034, a bishop, whose name is not chronicled, announced that he had miraculously received from heaven the order to preach peace on earth. The feudal lords were persuaded to meet in council with the prelates, to lay down rules for the peace of God. At first, it was too opposed to the manners of the day to have much effect. Whether for self-defence or the execution of vengeance, private war was a wild kind of justice, which could hardly be renounced, even while its consequences were deplored. Ultimately it was agreed that, to render due honour to the Sabbath, no man should attack his enemy on Sunday, no one should attack in any way a clerk or a monk travelling unarmed, or a man going to, or returning from church, or accompanied by women; no one should attack a church or the houses within thirty paces of it, under pain of excommunication, to be converted into anathema at the end of three months' impenitence. In this way the peace of God checked brutal passions to a certain extent, by enforcing the laws of religion and humanity. Little by little the trêve de Dieu was adopted in France and England, and

was confirmed by Pope Urban the Second, at the Council of Clermont, 1095.

As to treaties of peace, history supplies them by the bushelful. We may sweep them up together in heaps, as we would the leaves of the coming autumn. Treaties, unfortunately, are radically deciduous, and by no means evergreen in constitution. A Light of Diplomacy once sang thus:

> Come hither, come hither—by night and by day,
> We linger in treaties that never are done;
> Like the waves of the summer, as one dies away,
> Another as short and as shallow comes on.
> And the treaty that's o'er, in expiring, gives birth
> To a new one, as false and as hollow in bliss;
> And oh! if there be arrant humbug on earth,
> It is this, it is this.

Sundry commentators on treaties of peace have uttered wise saws which deserve some attention at the present moment.

A point of the first importance is: if public agreements or treaties of peace are regarded by nations as utterly sacred and inviolable, nothing can be more conducive than such treaties to the repose and tranquillity of the human race. Princes and nations having no common judge who is competent to take cognisance of and pronounce judgment respecting the justice of a war, men could have no confidence in a treaty of peace, if there existed fears of its being broken under ordinary circumstances. The expression "ordinary circumstances" is used, because there are cases in which the injustice of the conditions of a treaty of peace are self-evident. When the unjust conqueror abuses his victory to the point of imposing on the vanquished harsh, cruel, and absolutely insupportable conditions, international law would refuse to sanction such treaties, or to impose on the vanquished the obligation of complying with them.

Hear another bit of sage advice: "It is but too common that, in a treaty of peace, those who have been victorious during the war take all the advantage they can of their successes, by making those who have been beaten, and whom they know incapable of keeping the field any longer, buy the peace at a very dear rate; as it was proposed to make the French do it in the treaty of Gertrudemberg, which the late King of France, Louis the Fourteenth, would never submit to. A prince should never refuse to enter into a treaty, on honourable and equitable terms, to put an end to a destructive war; since none is sure that victory, which is as great a jilt as fortune itself, shall always accompany his arms; and that favourable opportunity once neglected, a turn may happen in the affairs, which shall force him perhaps to make a dishonourable peace."

When flatterers told Gustavus, after his great successes, that he was an instrument of Providence for the salvation of mankind, a visible proof of the Almighty's goodness, "Say rather of his anger," replied the conqueror. "If the war I have waged is a remedy, it is far more insupportable than all the evils you have had to bear."

More instructive and convincing than any argument or anecdote just now, is to flit across the Channel and go and see what war has done, and what peace would have left undone.

IN THE FIELD WITH THE PRUSSIANS.

A MARCH TO THE FRONT WITH THE GRAND DUKE OF MECKLENBURG'S CORPS.

HALT! How gladly we obeyed that order! It was four P.M., and the weather, which had been as bad as it could be during the day, at last seemed inclined to be more merciful. The sun struggled hard to unveil himself from his thick envelopment of clouds, and, as the mud-splashed troopers in the van drew up at the welcome order, one could see a faint gleam from a few stray sunbeams on their spiked helmets. The place which the Grand Duke had chosen as a resting-place for his corps of over thirty thousand men was not a large town with comfortable cafés and hotels, nor was it a large village. As far as I could see, far and near, there was not a single house.

"Surely we shall go on?" I said to a young dragoon officer.

"The word halt means stay here," was the answer. "I, for one, don't wish to move another step, neither do you, do you, Fox?" said he as he patted his beautiful steed. "I say, young fellow," he continued, "you had better bivouac with us; we'll show you how to make a bivouac comfortable."

"Very well," I said, "I shall be very happy to learn." The bugle sounded, and the men fell out of marching order, and got into groups.

The road by which we had come was flanked on one side by a vast plateau, with a few copses here and there dotting its surface; on the other side of the chaussée the ground sloped gently downwards for a few yards, and then made a rapid descent till it met a branch of the blue Moselle, which danced over the boulders in the

rocky valley below. The beautiful chaussée, which was lined by two rows of fine lime-trees, was crowded by horses and baggage waggons, although most of the men had long since crossed on to the plateau; gradually these were disposed of, however, and the chaussée was perfectly clear. Men now came with bill-hooks, and the most beautiful trees, being chosen on account of the thickness and number of their branches, were felled. As each giant came down with a crash, so many men would come and cut the branches off, and bear them away to the spot appointed for their company's bivouac. It was a curious sight to see these trees falling over, two or three at a time, as far as the eye could reach down the chaussée. No more should they delight the Frenchman's eyes, and give shade to the weary peasant in the noonday heat. A few hacks from a German hatchet, and the work of years of care expended on them was undone. It was strange to see how the men built their various habitations. Usually ten or a dozen would club their supply of branches together to build what they called a palace. When finished I can't say that these buildings bore much resemblance to palaces in the usual acceptation of that word, but they answered their purpose well enough. Sometimes, however, a man seemed to prefer building a place of shelter for himself; this I usually noticed was the case if a man had a private supply of straw in one of the carts. It might be a mere handful, but it was such a precious article that its fortunate possessor was deemed quite justified in keeping it all to himself. The officers of the dragoon regiment with whom I bivouacked made their servants prepare their huts, under their supervision, and they certainly did have a supply of straw, which, though not very abundant, was some sort of covering to the ground sodden with rain.

The baggage waggon, a required cart, was unloaded; its contents consisted of a table, and four or five chairs, also required, and half a dozen cases of champagne, which I don't think were paid for.

"Here's luxury—tables, chairs, champagne! Why, the Parisians don't get much more than this," said a dragoon officer.

I took a hatchet, and set to work like a backwoodsman. It was a busy scene; the men had all piled their arms almost within reach of where each man was to sleep. They were all piled in fours, with the bayonets fixed, and on the top of the bayonets the spiked helmets were placed. As night approached, the bivouac fires illumined the gloom, and faces gradually gathered round them. The outposts, horse and foot, were all on the alert; for although Marshal Bazaine would have to pass Prince Frederick Charles's forces before he could pepper us with his chassepots, should he wish to make a sortie, the distance from Metz was very inconsiderable. Beasts which each regiment had been driving on ahead of them were quickly slaughtered. Oxen and sheep seemed to be slaughtered indiscriminately, some of the soldiers getting beef, some mutton.

More carts now appeared on the bustling scene. What can they be, some drawn by three, some by four horses, attached to the carts by ropes? On they come. What do these wretched old tumble-down carts contain? Look at their drivers; why one would think the creatures were buffoons or clowns. One is dressed in a German soldier's uniform coat of Prussian blue, his legs are enveloped in the red pantaloons of some departed Frenchman, a lady's bonnet covers his head. Are they French or are they Prussians? They halt near the different regiments, and their presence seems instinctively to be felt, for soldiers, without having apparently noticed their arrival, make quickly toward them. The man in clothes of many colours descends, and brings forth from his cart a cask and a stand for it. This cask contains a fluid which both Germans and English know by the name of schnaps. The Mecklenburgers fill their flasks with it, as they have been emptied during the tiring march, and also buy bread, and sausages, or cheese, from the man in the cart, who goes by the name of "the market-tender."

"Now, my friend," said Von Uslar, "come, let us sit round our bivouac fire and have a talk."

I willingly consented, as I was wet to the skin.

In a few moments two more dragoons joined us. The conversation was entirely on the war, of course. We all had the greatest respect for Marshal Bazaine's powers, and none of us thought lightly of what would be the consequence if that savage old lion broke loose.

"I wonder how many men he has under him?" I said.

"About eighty or ninety thousand," was the answer.

"He has the Guards' corps and three other corps, I think," said a dragoon, light-

ing his fourth pipe. "Von Uslar," continued he, "have not you got a pack of cards?"

"Yes," said Von Uslar; "here they are."

We sat round a cask, and by light of the blazing bivouac fire we began a game of whist, of which we had not finished the first rubber, when heavy drops began to fall.

"Holloa! again a wet night," said Von Uslar. "What a time we have had of it! Three weeks' bivouacking every night in the rain. Some people say bivouacking is fine; let them come and try it. I, for one, prefer the worst roof to the best bivouac. It's no use going on, or these cards won't last another game out; as it is, it is difficult enough to tell one from another even now."

We now crouched round the fire, which hissed as the heavy drops came pattering down.

"Here's a night!" exclaimed another dragoon. "What a strange fellow you are to come this immense distance, to this wretched place, for the sake of helping wounded foreigners."

"Why," I answered, "I am amply rewarded by the pleasure I feel in the excitement of adventure, and in being of a little use. And as for immense distances, why a fellow does not think much of that when he has been cruising about for three years in the English navy from Labrador to the West Indies."

"Potstausend," said the officer, "we think ourselves great travellers in having been to Bohemia in 1866 and in being here now, do we not, Von Uslar? And now we meet an Englishman who, only half our age, has been all over the world, and thinks nothing of it. You are wonderful people, you Englishmen; it is a great advantage you islanders have over us. Travelling improves the mind more than tons of books; at least, so I think."

"Good-night," said Von Uslar. "Come along, Englishman; there's a bit of wet straw between us, and a few twigs overhead, which let in every drop of rain."

I did up every button of my waterproof, undid a rug, and laid myself down in the first soldier's bivouac I had ever slept in. The rain dripped on my face and pattered on the rug and mackintosh; but I was soon asleep, in spite of the constant gruff "Wer da" of the German sentries and the uncomfortable surroundings.

Grey dawn found me sitting upright, rubbing my eyes, and extracting my feet and legs from a pool of water and mud into which they had sunk during the night. To say I felt cold would give you no adequate idea of what I felt. I was too numbed to be cold. I threw the wet rug off me, took off my mackintosh, and scampered down the road. The day was fine, and after half an hour's running and walking, I came back to get a tin panful of hot coffee, and to place my soaked boots over the glowing embers of a bivouac fire.

"We start at six," said Von Uslar, "and we go through Pont-à-Mousson. The Grand Duke is going to review us there."

"I'll ride on," I said. "The road is all open to Pont-à-Mousson, is it not?"

"Right away to Toul," was the answer.

A couple of hours' hard riding brought me to Pont-à-Mousson. I certainly was not sorry to take off my clothes, which were still wet through, in a comfortable room in the Hôtel de France, and sitting before a blazing fire, I made myself and them once more dry and warm.

Pont-à-Mousson is a lovely little town on both sides of the Moselle, with a ruined castle crowning a hill overlooking the usually peaceful valley. Alas! all was changed now; the ruined castle and the green hill were certainly still there, but no longer was the valley they overlooked peaceful. The heavy lumbering waggons of war rattled over the stony streets, and the tramp of armed thousands mingled with the loud, deep-toned voices of the German soldiery.

In front of the Hôtel de France at Pont-à-Mousson there is a large square open space. Exactly opposite the hotel is the town-hall, out of the balcony of which was hung the following German inscription: "Not unto us, but unto God be the praise. Hail, Wilhelm!" In this building the governor of Pont-à-Mousson had taken up his abode, and there were about two thousand Prussian troops garrisoned here, besides something like seven thousand wounded, distributed amongst the various buildings, so that the town was very full. I had just begun lunch when I heard the sound of a band approaching, and on going out I found the vanguard of the Mecklenburgers already in the market-place. It was past noon, and the sun had come out, and was shining brilliantly. Underneath the inscription hanging out of the town-hall's balcony, a group of handsomely attired officers on horseback stood awaiting the arrival of the army corps. The Grand Duke's horse was a little in advance of those belonging to the

officers of his staff. The Uhlans came trotting along; as they got opposite their leader they turned their eyes towards him. The Grand Duke cried in a loud voice, "Guten Morgen." There was a shout in reply from the Uhlans, and the splendid troop swept by. A band next appeared, and the Grand Duke motioned it to a spot exactly opposite to where he stood. The heavy tramp, tramp of the soldiers in a swinging step was now heard, but not another sound; on they came, with bayonets fixed, and their spiked helmets dancing in the sunbeams. It was a glorious sight.

There were no signs of weariness; the men, who had now spent three whole weeks in the open air, and for that time had been bivouacked in the pouring rain, showed no signs of discontent or fatigue. Onwards, press onwards! seemed the talisman which pervaded the whole force. The band stopped playing; the head of the leading column was now opposite the town-hall.

"Guten Morgen!" said the Grand Duke again.

All answered the greeting; from rank to rank it swelled into an irresistible wave; like a roar or thunder-clap it rolled along the sky, caught up and re-echoed by regiment after regiment through that mighty host passing through the narrow streets. The last sound of this burst of feeling had scarcely died away, when the band struck up the tune, Was blasen die Trompeten.

The soldiers passed, walking over four miles an hour. There was not a vestige of mud on their uniforms. They looked as if they had just been to Sunday parade in Germany, all was so bright and clean; yet they had been marching since six that morning, with eighty pounds weight of accoutrements and clothes.

The string of soldiers seemed ceaseless. On, on, on, hour after hour. After ten thousand men had passed, marching always four, and, when there were officers, five abreast, there was a clatter of hoofs, and a battery of light field guns trotted through the town, those springless carriages bumping their burdens, which do so much in war. The first thing a soldier asks when his regiment is on the march is, "Where are the guns?" Woe betide the commander who has to answer, "There are none!"

Again regiments of the line passed. They were all alike. Each man bore a joyous, defiant look; each one seemed to bear his heavy burden and long march with the utmost nonchalance.

Following a couple of line regiments came a company of engineers. These are the hardest worked men in every army corps, and their clothes already showed hard wear; and this for the Mecklenburgers was only the beginning of the campaign. Following this body of veterans came a pontoon train. It seemed strange to see an army carrying boats about with them; but bridge making is a very important branch of war making, as was shown to great advantage near Paris, when all the bridges were blown up.

Following the pontoon waggons (each of which, like the guns, was dragged by three pairs of horses), came more infantry, and other batteries of field artillery. Each regiment's band changed places with that of the former one. At last the light blue coats of the dragoons appeared, and their mounted band, with no other instruments than cornopeans, relieved the band of the foregoing infantry regiment. They played the German Fatherland. Von Uslar's troop looked in apple-pie order, and the Grand Duke called him to his side, and complimented him on their appearance. More artillery followed. The string seemed endless. Hour after hour fled, and still the living mass poured onward. A splendid band now struck up Die Wacht am Rhein, and the men, one and all, joined in. How many times had that song been sung since they had crossed and parted from that beloved stream? It was sad to think that so many of those manly fellows, now rolling out the deep notes of the solemn music, would never see the Rhine again. Each heart seemed wrapped in the song, however, which rose and sank, and rose again, while the tramp, tramp of the measured tread kept time. They had now been marching five hours consecutively through the town, and had been eleven hours on the march, yet the Grand Duke sat his horse, and still regiment after regiment passed before him. Six o'clock came and found the stream still flowing on. A band of a new regiment had just taken its place, and half the soldiers belonging to the regiment had passed, when there was a block. What could this mean? The first block for six hours! The Grand Duke was probably getting hungry, for he was terribly enraged at the stoppage. An aide-de-camp left his side, with an imperious message in all probability, for he spurred his horse through the gaping crowd of townspeople with the most utter contempt for life and limb. Many a man's muttered curse and many a

woman's shriek of horror followed his track to the front. Ten minutes passed, but still the Mecklenburgers were at a dead lock. In vain the Grand Duke ordered the men to crowd forward; in vain aide-de-camp after aide-de-camp left his side. At last the cause of the stoppage became apparent. A wounded convoy of French prisoners, some in carts, some on foot, got as far as the market-place. What a frightful contrast was there — the conquerors and the vanquished! There was a perfect yell of horror from the French crowd when they appeared, guarded by a file of Bavarians on either side. The Grand Duke ordered them to remain on the market-place till his army corps had passed, and rated the officer in charge soundly for having stopped the progress of thirty-five thousand men, with all their artillery and baggage.

The splendid appearance of the German troops showed the glorious side of war, but one had only to turn one's eyes to the crowd gathered round the wounded sons of France, to see the sad side. There they lay, with bandaged heads and arms in slings, racked by pain and crushed by misfortune, and had to watch the victorious march of their enemies into their bleeding country. Women would look at the stern face and manly figure of the Grand Duke reviewing his passing host, and then sidle up to their own countrymen to give them a drink of water, looking afraid of being caught at such an act of humanity, or ashamed of doing it; while the French peasants, with brows knit and teeth set, looked perfectly demoniacal in their bitter hate.

At last the ambulance train appeared. The waggons were eight in number. After the surgeons came a few companies of the line bringing up the rear. Thirty-five thousand men had passed through Pont-à-Mousson for the front. As the last files were in the act of passing, the aide-de-camp, who had been so careless in riding through the crowd, reappeared, and was spurring to the Grand Duke's side, when there was a report from a rifle, and a bullet struck a wall close by the aide-de-camp. He turned very pale. The little white puff floated away over the house from whence it had issued. There was a rush of the German soldiers garrisoned in the town, who had been looking on at the review, to catch the would-be assassin, but he was nowhere to be found.

The next day the district was fined two thousand pounds for this single shot, which had missed its object. Such was the iron hand held by the victorious German army over the people of France.

MY NEW IDEA.

DEDICATED TO MM. LES CHEVALIERS D'INDUSTRIE.

In Two Parts. Part I.

Placed—owing to a combination of circumstances to be hereafter described—in a situation of great retirement, which affords me many most favourable opportunities for study and reflection, I have determined to employ such time as is at my disposal in putting together a short account of a certain curious episode in my life, a truthful description of which cannot, I think, fail to impress all who become acquainted with its details with a considerable amount of respect for an extraordinary display of ingenuity, and at the same time of compassion for an equally extraordinary exhibition of ill luck.

I have been, all my life, an original thinker —one of those men from among whom the ranks of the great inventors, discoverers, and originators are recruited. Indeed, this peculiar bias of my mind began to show itself at a very early age, so that I remember, when a mere boy, engaging in a competition, having for its object the invention of a new kind of omnibus which should be entirely free from the defects which belong to the existing vehicle. My design had great merits, but it was not accepted. There was some difficulty, as far as I remember, in connexion with the hind-wheels and the door, involving the necessity of sacrificing one or the other of those institutions, and as they were both looked upon by the authorities as essentials to a properly organised omnibus, my scheme fell through.

As I advanced in years, this tendency of my intellectual faculties to expand in the direction of inventiveness continued to develop itself more and more. It prevented me from settling down to any definite occupation. I always felt, indeed, very strongly, that there was one particular profession, or calling, for which I was pre-eminently fitted by nature—and from embarking in which I was only deterred by the one obstacle of its non-existence as a recognised business — I mean that of a suggester, or general adviser, on the largest scale. In this line I could always have done, and could still do, a prodigious good stroke of business. This was my niche.

If I could only have established myself in this profession of general adviser, I feel sure, as I look back, that incalculable advantage would have accrued to all sorts of people. It is really astonishing how fit I was for this post. I could have advised mankind upon all sorts of subjects. I should have been in a position to inform all those who might have consulted me exactly what course to pursue in every difficulty, great or small, besides furnishing, without hesitation, satisfactory solutions to all those social problems by which society is so continually puzzled. This function, of which I have spoken, having, however, owing to the indifference of mankind to its own interests, no existence, I set myself to consider what line of life would suit me next best to the oracular business, and soon came to the conclusion that the next best thing to being a General Adviser would be to become a General Inventor. And here I may remark that I had no sooner set up in this capacity than I became almost bewildered at the fecundity of my own inventive faculties. My brain was actually flooded with new and valuable ideas. To begin with, I naturally returned to that old notion of my boyhood of an improved omnibus—an idea which, purged of the faults which disfigured the original design, developed itself rapidly into what did, and does, appear to me to have been a very great and remarkable invention. My omnibus was to be called the dos-à-dos, or "seclusion" omnibus, the seats being arranged back to back, and each provided with a distinct roof and sides of its own, presenting the appearance of one of those porter's chairs which are still to be met with in the halls of the British aristocracy. Opposite to each seat was a little door, with a step which, by a simple mechanical arrangement, descended whenever the door opened. The wheels were a difficulty for a while, interfering ruinously with the opening of these doors, but I conquered them ultimately, placing them under the vehicle, as in railway carriages, instead of outside it. The "seclusion" omnibus was a great idea, truly; so was the "oval pill," which —its bulk being so much in length and so little in breadth—was certain to slip down the throat almost without the consciousness of the swallower; so was my aërial machine, held in air by a balloon, and worked by vast paddles turned by the feet of the passengers; so was my system of tattooing every human being at birth with his or her name, rendering identification, under any circumstances which could possibly occur, a thing of certainty.

I soon found that to do anything with these inventions of mine—and there were many others besides, which I have not mentioned—in my native town, was a thing entirely out of the question. I had very good connexions there, it is true, and was, though I say it, thought a good deal of. My inventions got to be much talked about, and were pronounced by all the authorities of the town to be highly ingenious and deserving of general attention. Still it was agreed on all hands that a provincial town, however important, was not the proper sphere for the development of my genius, and that London was the place where my abilities would have the fullest scope. As I was in nowise unwilling to consent to this arrangement, the point was soon settled, and to London I went, big with schemes for attaining both fortune and fame.

I had excellent introductions. I have already stated that I had good connexions in my native town. I had always had a faculty for making friends, being—again though I say it, who shouldn't say it—an agreeable young fellow enough, with sprightly manners and a good deal to say for myself, so that I had made plenty of friends in the neighbourhood in which I resided, besides those inherited from my parents, both of whom were now deceased. All these worthy people were quite ready to give me letters of introduction to their connexions and friends in London, and I arrived there with social prospects of the best kind, and feeling very sanguine indeed as to my future.

The society into which I found myself introduced was one, the principal members of which belonged mainly to the commercial class, the same kind of people as were the friends who had furnished me with my introductions, only richer and more distinguished. Of course I met with many persons who were not engaged in mercantile pursuits, such as artists, literary men, and others, but I knew them only as guests encountered from time to time at the houses of my commercial acquaintances, and it was with these last only that I could call myself really intimate. I must confess that I found them, every one, perfectly ready to help me with all my plans for making a fortune. They put me in the way of pushing my inventions, and though no particular individual among them was concerned either in the manufacture of omnibuses, or in the pill trade, they had

business relations with all sorts of agents and others who were able to get at those who were so concerned, and to these persons they committed me and my schemes, comforting me with the assurance that I was in the best hands possible.

Alas! these "best hands" were able to afford me but little assistance. I dare say they did what they could. They certainly laid my statements and my designs before what are called "practical men"—men engaged in the different callings with which my inventions were connected. These were all against me. The practical carriage-builder, to whom my omnibus design was shown, objected to the number of doors—six on each side of the vehicle. He pronounced that it would be necessary to have at least two conductors, one on each side, lest while the official in question was taking a fare at one of the doors on the "near" side (as the vulgar and suspicious man expressed it), all the passengers on the "off" side should let themselves out and "bolt." Practical man, indeed! Unpractical idiot I call him. As if anything could be easier than to fasten each passenger in, and let him out on his ringing a bell provided for the purpose. This very wretched creature took it into his head, besides, that my plan of placing the wheels of my omnibus under the conveyance, instead of outside it, would necessitate the raising of the body of the vehicle to an inconvenient height from the ground. Idiot again! As if that did not entirely depend upon the size of the wheels!

It was so with all my inventions; the practical men invariably picked holes in them. The practical chemist, for instance, was of opinion that my oval pill would be all very well if it could be guaranteed to go down the throat end foremost; but suppose it should find its way into the œsophagus—absurd, pedantic expression!—crosswise, and stick there, "How then?"

My other inventions fared no better.

As to my idea of tattooing every newly-born child with its name—this being the business of no practical man in particular—I submitted to the world in general by means of a letter sent to one of the daily papers. But this scheme met with the worst fate of all, the mere proposal bringing down upon me a mixed torrent of indignation and ridicule which it was really most difficult to bear. I was accused on one side of wishing to reduce the whole community to the level of convicts and malefactors, and on the other of treating human beings as I would a flock of sheep, or New Forest ponies. In a word, no one would have anything to say to any one of my proposals, and I was soon brought face to face with the fact that, so far as the prospect of making a fortune went, I was no better off here in London than I had been in my native town.

Against all these failures, I had just this as a set-off, that my social successes were positively enormous. My circle of friends enlarged daily. Every time I dined out I made a host of new acquaintances, who in turn asked me constantly to their houses. I was, as I have already stated, lively and talkative, and I always observed that there were seldom any of those awkward pauses, which are so justly dreaded by the givers of entertainments, when I made one of the party. I think it was this power which I possessed, of running on perpetually with a glib flow of conversation, which got me so many invitations. At all events, there the invitations were stuck in my chimney-glass in a goodly array; invitations to garden parties, to dinners, to conversaziones, to balls. I never spent an evening alone by any chance.

Still, all this did not fill my pockets—on the contrary, I think it had rather a tendency to empty them. Live as carefully as he may, there are some expenses which a young man who goes much into society is certain to have to encounter. He must spend some money on dress, for instance. Hats and gloves are very expensive, and so, let me add, is clean linen. Then there is locomotion. Society is always rushing about, and rushing about costs money. It is desirable, too, for those who—well, who are not entirely secure about their position, to keep well with people's servants, and that, again, is not to be done without occasional disbursements. At all events, I spent a good deal of money, and as I received none at all, it may be conceived that my financial state could hardly be described as a satisfactory one, and that, far from improving, it continued daily to get worse and worse. Our troubles of a pecuniary nature sometimes sharpen our wits, and this truth was destined to be illustrated in my case, in a remarkable degree, as I shall proceed to prove.

The origin of many noble inventions is lost in obscurity, and it is a well-known fact that, in not a few cases, the authors of all sorts of glorious creations of the imagination have been unable to point to the exact moment when a great idea has en-

tered their heads, or to say by what particular incident or occurrence in their lives it was originally suggested. Just so is it with me in relation to a very ingenious—not to say sublime—conception, which developed itself in my mind about this time.

My great idea—as I propose henceforth to designate the ingenious and universally misunderstood conception, the history of whose development I am now writing—my great idea seems, like many other great ideas, to have grown and expanded gradually from a very small beginning. I was dining one day at the house of a friend, when happening in the course of conversation with my neighbour to raise my arm, which had been resting carelessly on the table, I observed that a silver spoon, which was lying in company with some forks by the side of my plate, had accidentally got inside the cuff of my coat, and that when I lifted my arm the piece of silver slipped up my sleeve and disappeared. I shook it out upon the table, and, in my sprightly manner, called the attention of the fair creature who sat beside me to the circumstance, pointing out to her how easily any one so disposed might in this way help himself to his friend's plate without being observed by his neighbours.

It was immediately after, and I suppose in consequence of, this apparently most trivial incident, that a thought, destined to have much influence on my future, first suggested itself to my mind. What a wonderful career, as an abstracter of articles not exactly belonging to him, a man might have who started with a good reputation and reputable connexions, and a large circle of friends! What endless opportunities of possessing himself of other people's property would come continually in his way, and how long he might continue his course of appropriating, so to speak, such property to his own use without anybody suspecting him! When the objects which such an one had st—— appropriated, came to be missed, all sorts of people belonging to a lower grade in society than that held by the real "knight of industry," as our neighbours excellently term such pickers up of unconsidered trifles — all sorts of servants, waiters, kitchen-helpers, and the like, would be suspected, while the friend of the family, the man whom everybody knew about, who had been so well introduced, and who moved in such good society, would never, so much as by a thought, be connected in anybody's mind with the disappearance of the missing property.

I look upon the arising of this train of reflections in my mind as the first hint of the awakening of the great idea within me. The faint streaks that suggested its dawning were beginning to show themselves. It was some time before the idea itself really peeped up above the horizon, but that the way was prepared for it by that dessert-spoon incident, is a fact which cannot, I think, be doubted.

As to the course of proceeding immediately suggested by that incident, I need hardly say that I did not enter upon it, although I was really exceedingly hard up. The thought of it, however, stuck to me, and sometimes when sitting at table I used to find myself abstractedly scooping up a fork or a spoon with my cuff, and then letting it out again, just to prove to myself, as it were, how very easily it might be done if one were so inclined. "With my acquaintance and my good name," I sometimes said to myself, "I might appropriate—unsuspected—enough objects of value to keep me quite comfortably." I did not, however, as I have said, act upon this crude idea, but it stuck to me and prepared the way for something on a much more splendid scale which was to follow. That "something" was brought into existence in rather a curious fashion. It was brought into existence through the immediate agency of a photograph book.

Socially speaking, a man may generally be considered as being in a bad way when he spends an evening, or indeed any portion of an evening, in examining a collection of photographic portraits. It is a proceeding which indicates a certain amount of desertion by his friends, or a dearth of conversational resources in the individual himself. Still, there are moments when we all come to it, and I came to it one evening at the house of a rich City friend, when my conversational powers had broken down under an attack of low spirits, engendered by an unseasonable and inopportune consideration of my affairs, into which I had fallen after dinner. In this disastrous frame of mind I loitered disconsolate into the back drawing-room, and seating myself by the side of the inevitable round table, commenced a minute examination of the contents of a large square photographic album, richly bound in crimson morocco, with gilt clasps.

The book was full of portraits of City men, business associates, and private friends of the commercial magnate whose dinner I had just been eating.

There they were, and there were their wives, and sometimes their sons and daughters. I was in a morose, savage temper that evening, and as I looked upon the portraits of these worthy capitalists, I could not help regarding them with something very nearly akin to hatred. "How ugly they all are," I said to myself. "How ugly, how vulgar, and how disgustingly solvent." The memory of my own impoverished condition was still haunting me. "Confound their smooth broadcloth and their square-toed, well-blacked boots. I hate them." I fell foul of their handwritings next; the book belonged to the young lady of the house, and she had got the signatures of nearly all the originals of those portraits written under each. "What writing!" I went on still in the same truculent mood. "'Commercial hands' chiefly, thick down-strokes, thin up-strokes; now and then an attempt at an autograph, with just a sprawl and a splutter to make 'John Brown' look as unlike the real thing as possible." I paused, and went on turning over the leaves and thinking. "And yet those signatures which I despise would go for something in the City. I wish I had one of each of them at the foot of a cheque for a thousand pounds. I wish—what—no—yes——" I stopped abruptly, a sort of hot shooting sensation seemed to pass through my body; the portraits of the capitalists began to revolve and swim before my eyes, and I was hardly able to support the weight of the book as it lay open upon my knees. My great idea was just beginning to suggest itself.

At this moment the young lady, the daughter of the house, to whom the book belonged, came up to the table, and, seating herself opposite me, began talking.

"I thought I saw you busy with my album," she said. "What do you think of the collection?"

I was still entirely upset and confused by the magnitude of the idea which had just dawned upon me, but I managed to stammer out that I regarded the collection as one of very great interest.

"It is rendered additionally so," I added, "by the autographs which are placed under the portraits. May I ask how you managed to get them?"

"Oh, quite easily. I got the photographs first and stuck them into the book, and then, when any one of the originals came to see us, I made him sit down and write his name under his portrait."

"Oh—that—was—how it was—done—was it? How easily managed!" I added, abstractedly.

"Yes; and, by-the-bye, that reminds me that I haven't got your signature yet. Your portrait is in the book somewhere I know—let me see—ah, here it is—but with no autograph. So I'll get you to write me one now. Here is a pen, and here is the ink—but," she continued, "you look quite bewildered, as if I had asked you to do something extraordinary."

"I was thinking of something," I said.

Then, rousing myself, I took the pen in my hand and wrote my name in my best style, and with none of those commercial down-strokes which my soul abhorred, I promise you.

That memorable evening was a turning-point in my career. From that smallest and most insignificant of incidents, the taking up of a book of photographs by a young man in a condition of listlessness and despondency, great results in connexion with the fate of the young man in question were destined to be brought about.

I had for some time seen very plainly that something must be done to retrieve my fortunes. The only question was what that "something" was to be—a question which I was continually asking myself, and to which I as continually received the same answer. "Go," said Destiny, "with all speed to America. There you will find something like a fair market for your abilities. There a man of your active and inventive turn of mind will be appreciated. There the novelties with which your brain teems will seethe and bubble to some purpose. Your discoveries and inventions will go at last for what they are worth. There your 'oval pill' will be swallowed by all sorts and conditions of men, and there you will ride on, in your own 'seclusion' omnibus, to wealth and glory."

Now all this I did "most powerfully and potently believe" to be true, feeling convinced that if I could once get to that great land of promise, the United States, all my difficulties would be at an end, that there I should at last be appreciated, that my inventions, on much too novel and startling a scale to suit our insular prejudices, would be adopted by an enterprising and unprejudiced race, and that in an incredibly short space of time fame and fortune would infallibly be mine. There was no doubt in my mind at all as to what the result would be, were I, and my schemes, once landed on American ground. The only thing that

troubled me at all in connexion with the idea of the journey was the question whence the capital was to come which would be necessary to enable me to start.

This was indeed a difficulty. As to my relations, I had already drained them dry as hay, in getting together the requisite capital to make that début in London which had been attended with such happy results socially, but which had led to so very little when regarded from a business point of view. From that quarter, then, I had nothing to expect. Still less had I any claim on my more recently made friends in London. Besides, even if I had felt that an application to any one of these was likely to lead to anything, I don't think I could have made it. I had really cut such a good figure before them, that I shrank from the notion of appearing now in the light of a beggar soliciting assistance. The idea was quite insupportable. Some other must be hit upon.

It was just when my affairs had arrived at this particular crisis, and when I was beginning to get thoroughly weary of assuring myself that "something must be done" every hour of the day, that my destiny was influenced, as I have shown above, by that very trifling incident of my getting hold of a photograph book with the names of those whose portraits it contained written underneath them. This trifling incident, as I have called it, suggested to me a ready means of getting out of my present difficulties.

As to the adoption of the expedient which had thus suggested itself to me, and the particulars of which will be presently detailed, I am willing to admit that there was something to be said against it, at the same time that there was much in its favour. Persons of a narrow and carping character would, doubtless, have objected that my scheme was not compatible with a scrupulous regard for the highest principles of what the world calls honour, and might even have gone so far as to say that the proceedings which I had in contemplation were regarded, from a certain point of view, almost dishonest. But I knew better.

It was thus that I reasoned with myself. "For the furtherance of certain great schemes infinitely beneficial to mankind if once carried out, I require a rather large sum of money—say a thousand or two of pounds, more or less. The acquiring of such a sum is attended with many and great difficulties. I cannot obtain it from my relations, because they are already at the end of their resources. I cannot earn it by personal exertion, in consequence of an extraordinary and, at the same time, a very widely-spread want of appreciation of my labour, and its results, on the part of my fellow-creatures generally. With regard to borrowing, again; in order to obtain a loan from a professional money-lender, I must be prepared with security which I have not got, while as to soliciting it from a friend or friends, even if I knew of any who would be willing to entertain my proposal—which I don't think I do—I should still shrink from making it, being, I am happy to say, blessed with a proud stomach and an unconquerable aversion to ask favours of any one. Under these circumstances, when a plan enters my mind by which I may, so to speak, avail myself of the resources of my acquaintances, without offending against any of the laws of delicacy and good taste, and giving them, as it were, the opportunity of doing a good action unknown to themselves, I put it to anybody"—I did not, by-the-bye, put it to anybody at the time, except myself—"I put it to anybody, I say, whether, if I failed to avail myself of such a chance, I should not richly deserve to be regarded as a blockhead of the densest calibre?"

Such were my reflections. Let me admit at once that they resulted in a determination on my part to run no risk of incurring this charge of blockheadism. The Great Idea which presented itself to my imagination when I sat in the back drawing-room of my City friend examining his daughter's photographic album was in no wise thrown away or wasted. On the contrary, it was cordially received—though it staggered me a little at first by reason of its immensity—and at last freely acted upon. What that Idea was, and in what way I made the very most of it, may, perhaps, be best explained by my recounting how I acted under its influence from first to last.

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THE ROSE AND THE KEY.

CHAPTER XXVI. COLLOQUY.

On reaching the library, Lady Vernon touched the bell.

"You know this room very well, Mr. Dawe? You see no change here?"

"This house has seen many generations," said he, looking up to the cornice and round, "and will see out a good many generations more."

He steps backward two or three steps, looks up at the Vandyck over the mantelpiece, nods to that very old acquaintance, and says "Yes."

Then he rolls his prominent eyes again about the room, unusually shadowy on this dark day, and spying a marble bust between two windows, the little man walks solemnly towards it.

"That is Mr. Howard, who was our vicar, long ago," says Lady Vernon.

The blue livery is standing, by this time, at the opened door.

"Poor papa placed that bust there," she continues, "and it has remained ever since."

"Indeed!" says Mr. Dawe, and peers at it, nose to nose, for some seconds.

"They took casts from it," she continues, "for the statue that the bishop wished to place to his memory in the church."

"Here?" says Mr. Dawe, turning his profile, and rolling his brown eyes suddenly on her.

"Yes, in the church of Roydon, of course, where, as vicar, he preached for so long."

"I see," says Mr. Dawe.

"I shall be engaged for some time particularly on business," says Lady Vernon to her footman, "and you are to admit no one."

"Yes, my lady."

And the apparition of gold, azure, and powder steps backward, the door closes, and they are alone.

Lady Vernon is smiling, with bright hectic patches in her cheeks. There is something a little piteous and deprecatory in her smile.

"We are quite alone now. Tell me what it is," she says, in a voice that could have been scarcely heard at the door.

Mr. Dawe turns on his heel, walks briskly up, and seats himself near her. He takes out his old silver box, with groups of Dutch figures embossed on it, and takes a pinch of snuff preparatory, with his solemn eyes fixed on her.

"Is it anything—alarming—what is it?" she almost gasps.

"There has been illness," he says, with his unsearchable brown eyes still fixed on her.

"Oh, my God! Is he gone?" she says, turning as white as the marble Mr. Dawe had just been looking at.

"Captain Vivian has been very ill, very dangerously ill," says the imperturbable little man in the black wig; "but he's out of danger now, quite—that's all over."

There was a silence, and Lady Vernon was trembling very much. She placed her finger-tips hard against her forehead, and did not speak for a few minutes.

Mr. Dawe looked at her with stoical gravity, and taking his spectacles from a very shabby case, put them on, and occupied himself with a pocket-book, and seemed to be totting up some figures.

"You guessed, of course, that I must have something to say on that subject?" he said, raising his eyes from the page.

"I thought it possible," she answered, with an effort.

"I could not in the drawing-room, you know——"

"No, of course," she said, hastily, and the colour returned with two hot flushes to her cheeks.

There was in her bearing to this elderly gentleman an odd embarrassment, something of pain and shame; a wounded pride struggling through it.

She rose, and they walked together to the window.

"He has got his leave. His troop is still at Chatham. The doctor says he must go to some quiet country nook. He has been thinking of Beaumaris," said the old gentleman.

"Is he as beautiful as ever?" she asked. "Oh, why should I ask? What does it matter? Is there any gift that God gives his creatures that is not more or less a curse?"

"You should not talk in that wild way, Barbara. If people can't control their feelings, they can, at least, control their words. It is only an effort at first. It becomes a matter of habit. You shan't talk so to me."

She looked at him angrily for a moment of silence.

"You treat me with a contempt, sir, that you never could have felt if I had not trusted you so madly," she cried, passionately.

The tone, fierce and plaintive, was lost on the phlegmatic old man in the black wig.

He delivered a little lecture, with his thin brown finger raised, and his exhortation was dry, but stern.

"You have been rash and self-willed; you have been to blame. Your unjust imputation shan't prevent my saying that, and whatever else truth requires. Your difficulty is the creation of your own passions. I don't say look your difficulty in the face, for it will look you in the face; but take the lesson it teaches, and learn self-command."

"Don't blame me for this. I met him first in a railway carriage. Who can prevent such accidental acquaintances? He was so attentive, and so agreeable, and so gentleman-like. I had chosen to travel alone, without even a maid. You'll say I had no business doing so. I say, at my years, there was nothing against it; it was more than four hours; there were other people in the carriage. I never meant to seek him out afterwards; it was the merest accident my learning even his name. I had not an idea that you knew him. When I met him next, it was in town, at Lady Stukely's. I recognised him instantly, but he did not know me, for my veil had been down all the time." This narrative Lady Vernon was pouring out with the rapid volubility of excitement. "I was introduced to him there. Perhaps I have been a fool; but there is no good, now, in telling me so. I have seen him since, more than once, and gone where I thought I was likely to see him, and I succeeded. If I have been a fool, God knows I suffer. My difficulty, you call it! My difficulty! My agony is the right word. To love as I love, without being loved, without being loved ever so little!"

"So much the better," said Mr. Dawe, phlegmatically. "What are you driving at? You ought to consider consequences. Don't you know the annoyance, and possibly litigation, to which your folly would lead? In a woman of your years, Barbara, this sort of thing is inexcusable."

"Why did you come at all? Why did you come in so suddenly, and — before people? Would not a letter have answered? Hast thou found me, oh! mine enemy?" she suddenly almost cried, and clasped her fingers for a moment wildly upon his arm.

"A letter?" he repeated.

"Yes, a letter. You should think. It would have been more merciful," she answered, vehemently.

"Not when I had so many things to talk to you about," he retorted, quietly.

"I would have met you anywhere. You ought not to have come into the room so suddenly," she persisted. "You alone know my sad secret. You might have remembered that people are sometimes startled. You say I have no self-command. I think I have immense self-command. I think I am a stoic. I know how you tasked it, too. I knew you had something important to tell me, and that *he* was probably involved."

"H'm! Yes; I'm an old friend of yours, and I wish you well. And I'm Captain Vivian's friend, and was once his guardian, and I wish him well. And this kind of thing I don't approve of. And you'll get yourself spoken about; you *are* talked of. People saw you alone at Chatham last year; and if they come to connect your movements with his, think what it will be."

"He's the only person on earth I love, or ever shall love."

"Barbara, you forget your child, Maud

Vernon," said the old man, with hard emphasis.

"I don't forget her," she answered, fiercely.

The old man turned away his head. There was no change of countenance; that, I believe, never changed; but the movement indicated disgust.

"I say I love him, with all my love, with *all*," she repeated.

"Be it so. Still, common prudence will suggest your keeping that love locked up in your own heart, a dead secret."

"I am determined, somehow or other, to meet him, and talk to him, and know him well," she persisted; "and you shall assist me."

"I'm wholly opposed to it."

"You'd not have me see him again?"

"No."

"Why? What are you? Who are you? Have you human sympathy? Good Heavens! Am I a free woman?" she broke out again, wildly.

"Certainly, quite free," said Mr. Dawe, cutting her short with a little tap on his snuff-box. "You can do it, Barbara, when you please; however, whenever, wherever you like best; only you have a right to my judgment, and I'm quite against it."

"I know, Mr. Dawe, you are my friend," she said, after a brief pause. "I know how I can trust you. I am impetuous, perhaps. I dare say you are right. You certainly would speak wisely if your counsels were addressed to some colder and happier woman. Why is it that to be cold, and selfish, and timid, is the only way to be happy on earth? If I am sanguine, audacious, what you will, I can't help it. You cannot understand me—God knows all; for me to live any longer as I am is worse than death. I'll endure it no longer. Oh! if I could open my lips and tell him all!"

"There, that's it, you see! You are ready to die now to be on more intimate terms with him; and if you were you would be ready to die again, as you say, to open your heart to him. Don't you see? Don't you perceive what it is tending to? Are you prepared for all that? If not, why approach it? You would be in perpetual danger of saying more than you think you should."

Mr. Dawe had probably not spoken quite so long a sentence for more than a month.

"I may be a better listener, Mr. Dawe, in a little time. Let us sit down. I want to ask you about it. Tell me everything. What was his illness?"

"Fever."

"Fever! and he was in great danger. Oh! my darling, my darling, for how long?"

"For two days in great danger."

Her hands were clasped as she looked in his face, and she went on.

"And there is no danger now? It is quite over?"

"Quite," he repeated.

She looked up, her fingers raised a little, and a long shuddering sigh, like a sob, relieved her.

"I had the best advice—the two best men I could get from London. He's all right now; he's fairly under weigh, and nothing can go wrong; with common prudence, of course. I have the account here." He held his pocket-book by the corner, and shook it a little.

"He was near dying," she repeated. "Why didn't you tell me? I knew nothing of his danger."

"The doctors did not tell me the extent of it till it was over," he replied.

"Think what it would have been if he had died! I should have been in a madhouse. I should have killed myself."

"Don't, don't, don't. Nonsense. Come, you must not talk so. I admit it is a painful situation; but who has made it? You. Remember that, and control your—your vehemence."

"Has he been out? Is he recovering strength?"

"Yes. He has been out, and he has made way; but he is still an invalid."

"I want to know; I must know. Is there any danger still apprehended?"

"None; I give you my word," said Mr. Dawe, dryly.

"He is still very weak?" she urged.

"Still weak, but gaining strength daily."

"How soon do the doctors think he will be quite himself?"

"In five or six weeks."

"And his leave of absence, for how long is that?"

"It has been extended; about four weeks still to run."

"I think I know everything now?" she said, slowly.

Mr. Dawe nodded acquiescence.

"He's not rich, Mr. Dawe; and all this must cost a good deal of money. It is only through you I can be of any use."

"Yes; I was his guardian, and am his trustee. I had a regard for his father, and his grandfather was essentially kind to me. But I have learned to regret that I ever

undertook to interest myself specially in his affairs; and you, Barbara, are the cause of that regret."

"You mustn't reproach me; you know what I am," she pleaded.

Mr. Dawe responded with his usual inarticulate "H'm!" and an oracular nod.

"I can't help it; I can't. Why are you so cruelly unreasonable? Do you think I can learn a new character, and unlearn the nature that God gave me, in a moment?"

"I say this. If you cultivate Captain Vivian's acquaintance further, it is against my opinion and protest. I don't expect either to have much weight. I think you incorrigible."

Lady Vernon coloured, and her eyes flashed. But she would not, and could not, quarrel with Mr. Dawe.

"Surely you can't pretend there is anything wrong in it?" she said, fiercely.

"I did not say there was. Extreme imprudence; reckless imprudence."

"You always said everything I did was reckless and imprudent."

"Not everything. Some things extremely. And what you propose, considering that you are no longer young, and know what the world is, appears to me a positively inexcusable folly."

"It is possible to prescribe limits and impose conditions upon oneself," she said, with an effort; "and if so, there need be no rashness in the matter, not the slightest."

"Possible? We know it's not possible with some people."

"You always hated me, sir."

"Tut, tut!"

"You never liked me."

"Pooh, pooh!"

"You have always thought ill of me."

"I have always wished you well, Barbara, and accident, I think, enabled me to understand you better than others. You have great faults, immense faults."

"All faults and no virtues, of course," she said, with a bitter little laugh.

"You are capable of strong and enduring attachments."

"Even that is something," she said, with an agitated smile, and burst into tears.

"This is very painful, Barbara," said the little man in the black wig, while a shadow of positive displeasure darkened his furrowed face. "I believe my first impression was right, and yours too. I begin to think I had no business coming to Roydon."

Lady Vernon got up, and walked toward the window, and then turned, and walked to the further end of the room, standing before a picture.

He could see that her handkerchief was busy drying her eyes.

With a womanly weakness she walked to the mirror close by, and looked into it, and perhaps was satisfied that the traces of this agitation were not very striking.

She returned to her place.

"I have been a fool. My saying so will perhaps save you the trouble. I want to put you in funds again."

"When you please," said the old man. "Any time will answer. I have the figures here." His pocket-book was still in his hand. "But he has money enough of his own. He must think me a fool, paying all these expenses for him. And I think, Barbara, your doing so is a mischievous infatuation."

"And you would deny me this one pleasure!" she said.

"Enough, enough," he answers. "It was not about that I came here; that we could have settled by a letter. But I knew you would have fifty questions to ask. He has made up his mind to try change of air. I'm ignorant in such matters, and he has not made up his mind where to go."

"I have quite made up my mind upon that point," she answered.

"Well; and where?"

"Here," said Lady Vernon, once more in her cold, quiet way. "I'll ask him here."

"H'm!" said Mr. Dawe.

"Here," she repeated, with her old calm peremptoriness. "Here, at Roydon Hall. I'll receive him here, and he can't be quieter or better anywhere else, and you shall come with him."

It was now Mr. Dawe's turn to get up, which he did with a kind of jerk, and, checking some impulse, walked slowly round his chair, looking down on the carpet, and with a pretty wide circuit he came behind it, and resting his hands on its high back, and leaning over, he said, with a little pause, and a wag of his head to each word:

"Is there the least use in my arguing the point?"

"None."

"H'm!"

Mr. Dawe looked to the far corner of the room, with eyes askance, ruminating, and took a pinch of snuff, some of which shed a brown snow upon the cut pattern of the Utrecht velvet on the back of the chair.

"I can't say it is anything to me; nothing. I should be officious were I to say any more to dissuade you from it. Only remember, I have no share in the responsibility of this, excuse me, most strange step. As I suppose he will be brought here, one way or other, in any case, I think I had better come with him, and stay a day or two. It will excite less observation, so——"

"Thank you so very much, Mr. Dawe," said Lady Vernon, extending her hand, with an odd, eager gratitude in tone and countenance. "That is like yourself."

Mr. Dawe's usual "H'm!" responded to this little effusion, and with an ominous countenance he took her proffered hand in his dry grasp, and let it go almost in a moment.

Looking down on the carpet, he walked to the window, with his hands behind his back, and as, with furrowed jaws and pursed mouth, and a roll of his prominent eyes, he stood close to the pane of glass, down which the rain was no longer streaming, Lady Vernon opened her desk, and wrote a cheque for two hundred pounds, and coming to his side, she said:

"He does not suspect that he has a friend concealed?"

"Certainly not—certainly not," said Mr. Dawe, sharply.

"Will you apply this for me, and we can account another time? And you think me very ungrateful, Mr. Dawe, but indeed I am not. I only wish an opportunity may occur, if you could only point out some way. But you are so rich, and so happy. Well, some day, notwithstanding, I may be able to show you how I thank you. Let us return to the drawing-room."

As she passed the mirror, the lady surveyed her face again, and was satisfied.

"Yes," said Mr. Dawe, recurring to the matter of business, "I'll do that, and with respect to coming here, I say no more. Under protest, mind, I do it. Only let me have a line to say when you can receive us."

CHAPTER XXVII. THE NUN'S WELL.

Maud was found by her elders, on their return, nestled in a low chair, in one of those lazy moods in which one not only does nothing, but thinks of nothing.

They were talking as they entered, and Maud turned her eyes merely in their direction, being far enough away to feel herself very little observed.

"You will surely stay to-night, Mr. Dawe?" said Lady Vernon.

"No, certainly; thank you very much. I have made up my mind," replied Mr. Dawe, dryly.

Miss Maud was observing this little man in the wig with increased interest. There was in his manner, looks, and voice something of the familiarity of an old friend, she thought, without much of the liking.

Whatever the business which they discussed in the library, her mamma, she thought, was perfectly unruffled; but there were traces of displeasure in the old gentleman's demeanour.

"I ought to have told you that my cousin, Maximilla Medwyn, is staying here."

"She has returned, mamma; she will be down in a few minutes," said Maud.

"Oh! and we shall certainly have her here for some days. Will that tempt you to stay?"

"I like her well—very well, but I shall be off notwithstanding," said the old gentleman, with a rigid countenance.

The sound of the gong announced luncheon.

"We are a very small party," she said, smiling. "I'm glad you are here to luncheon, at all events."

"I've had a biscuit and a glass of sherry."

"But that is not luncheon, you know," said Lady Vernon.

Maud wondered more and more why her mamma should take such unusual pains to conciliate this odd, grim old man. For her part, she did not know what to make of him. Ungainly, preposterous, obsolete as he was, she could not assign him a place outside the line that encircles gentlemen. There was not a trace of vulgarity in the reserved and saturnine inflexibility of his face. There was something that commanded her respect, in the obvious contrast it presented to the vulgar simper and sycophancy of the people who generally sought "audiences" of her mother.

And Maud fancied when he looked at her, that there was something of kindly interest dimly visible through his dark and solemn lineaments.

"Luncheon and dinner," he said, "are with me incompatible; and I prefer my dinner. My train, I think, is due at six-twenty P.M. I suppose your servant can find a Bradshaw, and I'll consult it while you are at luncheon. Go, Barbara. Go, pray; you make me uncomfortable."

The little old man sat himself down in an arm-chair, took out his pocket-book, and seemed to forget everything but the figures over which he began to pore.

Miss Max joined the ladies at luncheon.

"Well, we shall find him in the drawing-room," she said, reconciling herself to her disappointment. "It is a long time since I saw him. But I dare say he's not much changed. Wigs wear wonderfully."

"So do ugly men," added Lady Vernon, carelessly.

So luncheon proceeded. And when it was over, the three ladies came to the drawing-room, and, looking round, discovered that Mr. Dawe was gone.

A minute after, Maud saw him walking under the trees of the avenue, with his broad-leafed, low-crowned hat on, and a slow, stiff tread, and his silk umbrella in his hand doing the office of a walking-stick. It was pleasant sunshine now.

The blue sky was clear and brilliant, and only a few white clouds near the horizon accounted for the rain-drops that still glittered on the blades of grass. Stepping carefully in the centre of the path, little Mr. Dawe, now and then shouldering his umbrella, and turning and looking about him, like a man reviving old recollections and scanning alterations, disappeared slowly from view, over the stile, leaving Miss Maud very curious.

"I'll put on my things, and try to find him," said Miss Max, in a fuss, and was speedily seen emerging from the hall-door in pursuit.

His walk being slow and meditative, his active pursuer did succeed in overtaking him. She knew very well that he was glad to see her, though his rigid features gave no sign, and he shook hands very kindly.

When these greetings were over, he answered her question by saying briefly:

"No, I shan't dine. I'm off."

"Without bidding Barbara good-bye!" exclaimed Miss Medwyn, drawing herself up in amazement.

"I've left my farewell in the hall. The footman will find it."

"A note, I suppose?"

"H'm," acquiesced the little gentleman. "My carriage will take me up in the village;" and he nodded gravely to the distant tower of Roydon Church, which happily did not return that salutation, though he continued to stare solemnly at it for some seconds, as if he thought it might, and ended by a second slighter nod.

"That is not a pretty compliment to me," she said. "I think you might have stayed till to-morrow."

"H'm," he remarked, and silence followed.

"Well, I see you won't."

Another pause, and a more impatient "H'm," and a quick shake of the head.

"So as that can't be," she resumed, "and as all things are so uncertain in this life, that we may possibly never meet again, I'll walk a little way with you towards the village."

Mr. Dawe uttered his usual note of acquiescence.

"And now you must tell me," she said, as they walked at a leisurely pace along the path which winds gently among the old timber, "what on earth brought you here? Has anything wonderful happened; is anything wonderful going to happen?"

"A word or two with Barbara," he said.

"You don't mean to tell me it is a secret?" said she.

"If it be, it is none of mine," he replied.

"Well but you can tell me generally, what it is about," she insisted.

"H'm! Ask Barbara," he answered.

"You mean, it is a secret, and you won't tell it?" she said.

Mr. Dawe left this inference unanswered.

"You found Barbara very little altered?" said Miss Max.

"As self-willed and unwise as ever," he replied.

"Ho! Then she wants to do something foolish?"

"She can do that when she pleases," he remarked. "Do you know the Tinterns, who live near?"

"Yes, pretty well," she answered, rather curious to know why he should ask.

"What do you think of them?"

"I rather dislike Mr. Tintern, I neither like nor dislike his wife, and I like his daughter very much indeed. His son I don't know; he is with his regiment in India," she answered. "Why do you ask?"

"You are as inquisitive as ever, Maximilla," he said.

"I've just satisfied your curiosity about the Tinterns, and you can't complain fairly of my question. I think your business with Barbara had something to do with them."

"You are sagacious," he observed; but whether he spoke in good faith or in irony his countenance helped her nothing to discover.

"Come, you must tell me. Are the Tinterns involved in the foolish thing she is going to do?" the lady insisted.

"She is going to do a foolish thing, and you, probably, will never know what makes

it so particularly foolish; that is, unless she carries out her folly to its climax."

"I may possibly guess more than you suppose," Miss Medwyn said.

But this remark led to nothing.

"You don't know young Tintern, you say, but you like his sister. Why?" asked Mr. Dawe.

"I like her because she is really nice—one of the very nicest girls I ever knew."

"Ha! Then, I hope she doesn't depend altogether on her father, for they say he has lost money?" said Mr. Dawe.

"She is not well provided for, although her mother was an heiress, you know; but there is something trifling settled on her."

"Well for her she doesn't depend altogether on Tintern. I'm told he is a distressed man, or likely soon to be so," he said.

"But, to come back to Barbara," resumed Maximilla: "I think you ought to exercise your influence to prevent her from taking any foolish step, particularly one which may affect others."

"I have none."

"If you haven't, who has?"

"No one ever had, for her good."

"For my part, I never knew what to think of her," said Miss Medwyn.

"I did," said Mr. Dawe.

He stopped short, and looked straight at her, being about her own height, which, even for a woman, was nothing very remarkable. His dark face looked darker, and his prominent brown eyes were inflexibly fixed on her, as he spoke a rather longer harangue than usual.

"She is a great dissembler," said Mr. Dawe. "She is proud. She has the appearance of coldness, and she is secretly passionate and violent. She is vindictive. All that is concealed. She has a strong will. People know that; but it is not inflexibility founded on fixed data. It is simply irresistible impulse. There is nothing fixed in her but a few likings and hatreds. Principles in the high sense, that is, involving the submission of a life to maxims of duty, she has none; and she thinks herself a paragon."

Maximilla laughed, and they resumed their walk, when Mr. Dawe had ended his speech.

"That seems rather a severe delineation, Mr. Dawe," said Maximilla Medwyn, with another little laugh and a shrug.

"It is true. I would repeat it to herself, if it could do her any good."

They followed the path, Miss Medwyn chatting, after her manner, gaily, until they nearly reached the stile at the village road.

"So here we part, Mr. Dawe."

Mr. Dawe gave her one of his oracular looks, and took her hand in his hard fingers.

"And it is very ill-natured of you not telling me what I asked you," she called after him.

Bestriding the stile, he looked back with the same solemnity, raised his broad-leafed hat, and disappeared on the other side, and Maximilla could not help laughing a little at the awful gravity and silence of the apparition which went down behind the wall.

The day was now brilliant, and Miss Medwyn was tempted to walk home by a path still prettier, though a little circuitous.

It was a favourite walk of hers long ago. Perhaps it was the visit of Mr. Dawe, with whom in old times she had often walked these out-of-the-way paths, that suggested this little ramble.

The lofty trees close about the path that she had now chosen, and gradually beset and overhang it in the densest shadow. Walking in the open air, on a sunny day, you could not fancy so deep a darkness anywhere. This is, of course, in the leafy days, when the tall elms, whose boughs cross and mix above, are laden with their thick dark foliage.

The darkness and silence of this narrow path are here so curiously deep, that it is worth going a mile or two out of one's way to visit it; and fancy will play a nervous wayfarer as many tricks in this strange solitude as in a lonely night walk.

At the side of this path, nearly in its darkest part, is a well, under an arch. It is more properly a spring, rising at this point, and overflowing its stone basin, and escapes, in a gush, through a groove cut in the flag that encloses it, in front. Two iron cups, hanging by chains, invite the passenger to drink of the icy water that with ceaseless plash and gurgle descends from the opening.

With a slow step on the light mossy turf she draws near this remembered point of interest. Her eyes have grown accustomed to the clear shadow. Two steps lead down to the level at which one can take the iron cup, and drink from this pleasant well.

If outside all is shadowy, you may suppose how obscure it is within this low arch.

As she looks, she sees something rise within it. It is the figure of a man, who

has just been stooping for a draught from the spring. His back is turned toward her.

We do not know how habitually we rely upon the protection of the upright among our fellow-men, until accident isolates us, and we confront a possible villain in a lonely place. There was no reason to suspect this man above other strangers. But a sense of her helplessness frightened her.

She stepped back, as most old ladies, with presence of mind, would have done under the circumstances. And very still, from her place of comparative concealment, she sees this faint shadow emerge, in shade less deep, and she discerns the long neck, lank jaws, and white eyeball of Elihu Lizard.

The lady pursed her mouth and frowned, as she might at a paragraph in the newspaper describing a horror; and she drew a little further back, and as much behind the huge trunk of the tree at the edge of the path as she could with the power of still peeping at Mr. Lizard.

That lank wayfarer, in such a place, having, we must suppose, a quieter conscience than Miss Max, did not trouble himself to grope and peep about for spies, or other waylayers, among the trees, and having wiped his mouth on his sleeve, he sopped his lank face all over with his coloured handkerchief, which he rolled into a ball, and pitched into his hat. Next he replaced his hat on his head, and gave it a little adjusting jerk.

Then Mr. Lizard threw his head back, so as to look up to the groining of branches above him. She could not tell exactly, so dark it was, what expression his odious countenance wore. Her active fancy saw a frown one moment, a smile the next, and then a grimace. Though these uncertain distortions seemed to flicker over it, I dare say his lean face was quiet enough then, and having popped something, which I conjecture to have been a plug of tobacco, into his mouth, he shouldered his stick with a little preliminary flourish, and set out again upon his march in the direction from whence she had just come.

This apparition gave a new direction to her thoughts. She waited quietly till she could hear his steps no more. She wondered whether he had been up to the Hall; but she recollected that this particular path crossed the park; there was a right of way by it, and therefore he need not have diverged to the house, nor have asked any one's leave to cross the grounds by it.

There remained the question, why was he here? Were she and Maud never to get rid of that odious attendant? She quickened her step homeward, and was glad when she emerged into the open light.

OLD HOUSEHOLD ORNAMENTS.

A CHANCE visit to a cottage in some tolerably out-of-the-way country village will have the effect of thrusting any elderly person, blessed with a reasonably long memory, far back into the days of his childhood. To him the chimney-piece he beholds will be a cemetery richly stocked with monuments dedicated to a whole series of usages now deceased. Let us pass in review the chimney ornaments of the past, not leaving unnoticed the decorations of the walls.

Among the oldest ornaments, or at least among those which I observed in my earliest years, were a pair of scriptural groups, very rudely executed in wax, and contained in oblong glass cases. They represented the Nativity and the Crucifixion. Of what original they were barbarous copies I do not know, but I recollect that in the group of the Nativity, the indispensable ox and ass stood by the manger. These animals, it should be observed, were not devised by the fancy of painters, but were derived from legends largely circulated among the people in the middle ages, and were received in perfect faith. From a similar source were obtained the traditional complexions of the Three Kings or Wise Men, which no artist ventures to alter, as well as their names, Melchior, Caspar, and Balthazar. These names are especially familiar in Cologne, where the skulls of the three kings are exhibited in the cathedral, and where the festival of the Epiphany is celebrated with extraordinary solemnity, the kings being the patron saints of the city.

Wax was an ingredient used frequently in the manufacture of ornaments for the interior of humble domiciles. A rough imitation of a basket in clay, painted green, and surmounted by waxen fruit, which it was supposed to contain, was an article frequently to be seen; so, likewise, was a wreath of artificial leaves, on the bottom of which was perched a waxen canary-bird, and which was suspended from the ceiling as an attraction for flies. Rigid economy was observed in the consumption of the wax; consequently, the hollow birds and fruits were broken by the slightest touch, and were rarely to be found in perfect condition

after a few days' possession. Faint copies of humanity, with pasteboard obelisks as substitutes for bodies, and waxen heads that nodded, were among the less common works of rude art, and I still remember an itinerant dealer, whose whole stock-in-trade consisted of waxen figures of seated children, which, warmly clad in white wool, presented a very cheerful and chubby appearance. The "young lambs to sell," the trade in which was promoted by one of the most popular London cries, and which consisted of lumps of white wool, each placed on four tin legs, were not ornaments, but toys.

Save in houses furnished after an extremely old fashion, the scriptural groups are scarcely to be seen at the present day. Almost equally rare are the ornaments made of black velvet, which were greatly in vogue fifty years ago. These, unless my memory deceives me, were exclusively confined to representations of the dog and the cat, the latter animal being the more popular of the two. They were perfectly flat, the velvet being glued to thick pasteboard, that it might be kept in an erect position when placed on its wooden stand. The eyes and a collar round or rather across the neck were of gold paper, and the lines of the body within the general outline were marked by a sort of bronzing process, whereby the dull monotony of the velvet was agreeably relieved. In size the animals varied considerably to suit the various tastes of purchasers, and sometimes a domestic interest was created by a small cat, placed in the same stand with a large one, and supposed to be the kitten of the latter. Though the figures were flat, a tendency to that "realism," of which there has been of late so much talk, was manifested by a small solid basket suspended from the mouth of the dog, the discrepancy of which with the character of the work passed wholly unnoticed. Indeed, a desire to avoid flatness by other means than those prescribed by the laws of perspective, was very usual among the humbler artists of, say, a century ago. I have seen the figure of a fine lady, painted on paper and pasted on a black ground, one arm, holding a fan, being left at liberty. The arm was, of course, as flat as the rest of the figure, but the mere circumstance that it was in a different position, gave an approach to solidity, which, at any rate, was satisfactory as far as it went. Those birds in alto-relievo, which modern ingenuity has clothed in real feathers, and which are often exhibited by tradesmen in fancy articles, had their precursors in certain baskets filled with strawberries, which, worked in wool, and raised to a similar elevation, were once to be seen in picture-frames on many an old-fashioned wall.

One of the oddest ornaments of the olden time was a beef-bone, the round protuberance of which was dotted with eyes, nose, and mouth, the rest of the bone being painted black, so as to present the appearance of a clergyman vehemently preaching, with widely extended arms. These, I suspect, had not been purchased, but were the work of some amateur artist, the display of whose talent was confined to a limited sphere. A choice collection of works of art, produced on a similar principle, is now to be found in one of the London oyster-shops, the claws of the lobster being judiciously arranged so as to form an image of Punch, whose nose, chin, hunch, and cap they closely resemble.

The reel-in-a-bottle was an object which combined the ornament with the puzzle. This consisted of a large phial, enclosing a perpendicular piece of wood, to which other pieces of wood were attached in a horizontal position, spreading out like the branches of a tree to the interior surface of the phial. That the reel or tree could not have been passed, in its actual condition, through the neck was obvious, and the question arose, how it was ever enclosed at all. Some suggested that the bottle was blown over the reel; but it is not impossible that the trunk was first inserted, with pendent branches, and that these were afterwards lifted into the horizontal by a dexterous operation. The dawning of a taste for chemical science was marked by the metallic tree, the root of which was attached to the cork of a bottle, and which, sparkling in its growth, grew downwards. The preparation fitted for this tree was sold by the dealers in scientific nick-nacks, and I am surprised that it has ever fallen into oblivion.

The imperishable ornaments were those manufactured from a material which we will agree to call china, although very little porcelain found its way into their composition, and they were certainly not derived either from the Celestial Empire, from Dresden, Sèvres, Chelsea, or, indeed, from any establishment fertile in articles of virtù. Probably there was not a specimen of the kind, which delighted the fathers of some of us, of which a fac-simile could not be easily purchased now. The elder

Kean as Richard the Third, Madame Vestris as Don Giovanni, a queer-looking Highlander called Rob Roy, long existed, and still exist, as samples of primitive plastic art. But they were rivalled early in the century by painted plaster-of-paris, which was largely consumed in the production of divers figures representing Mr. Liston as Paul Pry in various attitudes, and bearing ample testimony to the wide popularity of that great comedian. Quite of another school were the plaster parrots, painted bright green, which were large as life, and only less outrageous than the imperfectly painted plaster cats, likewise large as life, which sometimes nodded their heads. These are gone, never to return, but the china stags and greyhounds are still abundant.

The parrot and the cat were regarded with pronounced aversion by Mr. W. Hone, who, in one of that useful series of works wherewith, after quitting the field of political satire, he copiously illustrated the calendar, published woodcuts of the uncouth animals, placing in juxtaposition to these a copy of that studious little plaster child, who was always writing in a book, and had then lately appeared on the boards of itinerant Italian boys. "Look on this picture and on that," exclaimed Mr. Hone, with honest exultation, as he saw cheap figures in white or bronzed plaster forcing the old coloured abominations into the background. Truly, the days when Italian boys most flourished seemed to promise well for the diffusion of a taste for sculpture among the masses. Not only the conventional busts of Shakespeare and Milton, Scott and Byron, but tolerably correct copies of some of the most renowned works of antique art, the Apollo Belvidere, the Venus de Medicis, &c., were to be brought at a price, the extreme lowness of which was unknown to liberal purchasers; for the Italian boys made a point of asking for a sum at least the double of that which they were prepared to receive. The useful and the ornamental were combined in a very pretty little horse, which was commonly used by druggists as a sign that they dealt in veterinary medicines.

It is often the fate of reformers, that their own fall succeeds that of the abuses which they have reformed. The Italian boy with his board, his busts, his studious child, his classical statuettes, has followed the cat and the parrot, and his invitation, "Buy image," has never been heard by the young of the present generation. His figures, which were hollow, had taken their shape, I am informed, from the worn-out moulds of the dealers in those solid casts which, with the marks of the mould upon them, are purchased by artists, and naturally their consequent lack of sharp definition failed to satisfy the connoisseur. On the other hand, their appeal to the masses was but faint. Of all arts, sculpture is the least appreciated by the English multitude. Classical statues correspond to no domestic interest, and the scant attire of the Greek gods provokes lamentations over their impropriety, rather than admiration of their elegance, among all Britons who have not received a special training. I am not sure that the old, ugly poll-parrot, if revived, would not now find purchasers; that she would find more patrons than Venus or Apollo, I am convinced.

Derbyshire spar had its day, and watch-stands, urns, and candlesticks made of that native material, were long to be found on the chimney-pieces of the comparatively opulent; but, after all, the material, with its dirty white hue and its streaks of dingy purple, was not inviting. Still more insipid were the fancy boxes, adorned with patterns formed by convolutions of elder-pith, and worse still was the so-called filigree-work, which once gave employ to dainty fingers, and which consisted in forming a sort of tesselated surface by the juxtaposition of small pieces of gilt-edged paper rolled into minute cylinders. That these varieties of ornament are supplanted by those fanciful combinations of shells, which are usually purchased at the seaside, is matter for congratulation.

The princess, in the story of Aladdin, who nearly wrecked the rapidly acquired fortune of her husband, by requesting the genie (we won't say Djinn) to hang up a roc's egg from the ceiling of her palace, was, we are taught to think, a thoughtless and frivolous young person; but a recollection of the way in which the parlours of old country inns were decorated induces me to believe that her case, far from being exceptional, indicated a taste which was by no means peculiar to the East, but of which manifestations were to be found in this island. Decidedly there was a time when an English inn-keeper did not think his parlour properly furnished unless something egg-shaped or spherical hung from the middle of the ceiling. This was frequently the egg of an ostrich, which closely corresponded to the article desired by Aladdin's princess, the huge bird of the desert being almost as mythical a creature

in the eyes of our ancestors as the roc was in the eyes of an Oriental potentate. As for the Chinese, I don't believe they ever heard of the roc at all, so distinct is the mind of the Celestial Empire from that of Western Asia. Aladdin's China was drawn from an Arabian point of view, and was doubtless as much like the supposed original as David Garrick, in his black court-dress and tartan scarf, was like the Thane of Glamis.

Brighter, though considerably less curious than the ostrich's egg, was the spherical mirror, which was often used for a similar purpose, and from its polished surface reflected miniature portraits of all the guests in the room. But by far the shabbiest of these ornamental pendents was a hollow sphere of transparent glass, in which were gummed small flowers of chintz inserted through an orifice at the top. This work done, the ball was filled with white powdered chalk, which served as a ground to the tawdry relics of deceased bed-curtains. Oddly enough, an art similar to that which resulted in these coloured monstrosities, was brought into vogue within the last few years, and threw into temporary oblivion Berlin wool and crochet. By gumming paper figures, sold in the sheet, upon small glass vessels, sold plain, young ladies essayed to produce imitations of Etruscan pottery. The art had a fine long name, which I forget, and which some fair reader will be able to supply, but its reign was of short duration. No doubt the process was found to be niggling, sticky, and generally disagreeable.

Those tall old-fashioned clocks, with their heavy weights and pendulums in an oblong case, have often awakened serious doubts in my mind. In the kind to which I refer, there is an apparatus for showing the shape of the moon proper for every day of the month. Over the dial of the clock is a blue semicircular firmament, through which the luminary, represented by a circular disc, is expected to complete her journey, emerging from behind one dark semicircle which is to give her the crescent form, and descending behind another, the period of the full being manifested when she stands at the summit of the arc. In such dials the day of the month is likewise shown by means of a small orifice in the dial, through which the proper figure is visible.

Now I have seen many of these clocks, nay, one of them is in my possession; but never have I known the machinery which shows the days of the month and the phases of the moon to be in working condition. It is always at a standstill, and I never met a soul who knew how it was to be set agoing, or where it could be wound up. Assuredly some especial arrangement beyond the ordinary winding up of the clock, which goes for eight days, is required, otherwise we should find the 3rd of March falling on the 31st of February, with other incongruities of a like nature. The more I look at my clock the more sceptical I become, and my doubt settles down into this question: Was there ever a time when my clock actually showed the day of the month and the moon, or were these achievements always referred to the past, each successive owner, in his generation, pointing to the motionless figures on the dial, as a monument of the mechanical dexterity of another epoch? The clock is very good when doing the work of a clock, but in laying claim to these extraordinary gifts, is it not a mendacious humbug?

The hour-glass, frequently reduced to the half-hour-glass, was an object usually conspicuous on the cottage chimney-piece. To children, the thin stream of red sand passing from the upper to the under globe, and the unstable hillocks which it formed in the latter, were a source of pleasing astonishment. Much do I question whether this primitive measure of time was ever used for the precise purpose for which we consult our clocks and watches. We learn, on good authority, that the puritanical preachers of the seventeenth century were accustomed, while they preached, to have an hour-glass attached to the pulpit. The duration of the sermon could thus be at once ascertained by the congregation, who, if their instructor fell short of the hour, considered him intolerably lazy, and if he exceeded it, looked upon him as insufferably tedious. Here, the irreverence of the proceeding being set aside, the hour-glass was in its place. For measuring a given portion of time, without reference to time preceding, no instrument can be more serviceably employed than the figure of eight, so familiar to our fathers. This, indeed, is practically acknowledged by the invention of that miniature portrait of the hour-glass, which shows the exact time required for the due boiling of an egg, and which is now in common use. But fancy the hopelessness of trying to discover, by the aid of an hour-glass alone, whether or not it was three o'clock on a summer's afternoon. Even suppose some friend, blessed with a watch, called upon you at six in the morn-

ing, and gave you a fixed point to start from, the anxiety of the nine succeeding hours must have been dreadful. What wistful glances would be cast every now and then at that emblem of mortality, in fear lest the proper moment for turning it upside down should pass by, and thus demolish the calculation. Long before the right hour was completed the hour-glass would be dashed against the wall through the effect of mere desperation.

But, as I have said, I doubt whether the hour-glass was ever used as the chief means for ascertaining the hour of the day. In the times when "merry larks were ploughmen's clocks," and even now in primitive districts, many signs serve to indicate the progress and decline of sunlight. The shepherds of Virgil measured the approach of nightfall by the lengthening shadows of the mountains, and thus the whole visible surface of the earth became a sun-dial. With observations of such phenomena the inhabitants of large towns have little to do. They know when it is light, and when it is dark, and when it is dusky, and, for more precise information, the watch or the clock is at hand.

THE HARP UNSTRUNG.

Once to the touch of a gentle hand
I made sweet music in the land,
The tunes leaped out of my quivering strings
And the harmonies fanned them like angel wings,
Till they glowed and glittered like fire-flies bright
Sparkling with melody and light.

But the hand lies cold beneath the sod,
And the beautiful spirit dwells with God,
And my chords are broken and thrill no more
With the music, the life and the love of yore;
Silent unless when the winds go by,
And wake them to a sob, or sigh!

HOW TO SEE INDIA.

"My Boy in India" means something very different to what the words usually imply. A gallant youth, full of dash and pluck, glorying in his first uniform, longing ardently for active service, and delighted with his comrades, his station, his duties, and his sports; a steady, plodding junior partner or confidential clerk, who writes sanguinely of his prospects with the firm, and who has even hinted at coming home to choose him a wife; the school prizeman of his year, who went up gallantly to public examination, and having won his post in the civil service, is now on the high-road to a collectorship; the young engineer, who went out because of the many openings in India; the delicately nurtured lad, whose state of health gives you no little anxiety now that the hot season is coming on—are any of them the kind of life-portrait the phrase suggests. But my Boy in India had nothing in common with these. He was a grizzled Mahomedan from Madras, with a complexion which was nearly black, an excellent character, and some experience of travelling. He was a Bombay Boy by profession, and could wait at table as well as play valet and general servant, a conjunction of usefulness not always to be found, and which the Hindoo native is prevented by caste from attempting. I was averse to engaging my Boy. I could not see the necessity for his services, and I was strongly disposed to run counter to the advice of friends, and proceed on my journey up country without him. Why should I require a valet in India any more than in England? I communed with myself. He would be in the way. I could not provide him with sufficient employment. He would bother me by wanting to dress and undress me at morning and night, to brush my hair, to fiddle-faddle about my room; and he would make a needless addition to my expenses. I was wrong. A private servant is a necessity in India to the stranger travelling there for the first time, and who is ignorant of the language, the customs, and the people. The railways issue "servants' tickets" to first-class passengers at a considerable reduction on third-class fares; and the hotels do not charge for servants' board, which rather staggering liberality was explained when I found that my Boy always slept on the mat at my bedroom door, and only eat what he bought for himself, and cooked in the funny little metal vessel he produced from the centre of his bundle of clothes, like a brass kernel. In the item of wages, my Boy was, save the mark! dear. He had travelled before; he could speak what he called English, and he could understand my English fairly. He had testimonials from distinguished Anglo-Indians in whose service he had been; and his honesty was also vouched for by my Parsee landlord and good friend, Mr. Palonjee, of the Adelphi (Byculla) Hotel. In virtue of these gifts and qualifications, my Boy asked twenty rupees (or two pounds sterling) a month for salary and board wages, a proposition I closed with at once. It seemed wonderfully little, and it was not until some time afterwards that I learnt I was paying about double the market rate; and that less competent and

possibly less honest boys could be hired in Bombay at from eight rupees (or sixteen shillings) a month upwards. But "Sheyk Rustum"—he pronounced it in one word, "Sekreestun"—and I, settling to my own satisfaction that he had been nicknamed "Sacristan" by some eccentric high churchman, addressed him by that ecclesiastical title throughout our intercourse. Sheyk Rustum was an urbane treasure. His good qualities developed themselves constantly, and it is sufficient to say that he and I commenced our alliance within two hours of my landing in India, and maintained it throughout a rapid and comprehensive tour.

Given an uncertain number of weeks in India, and a keen desire to see as much of her wonders as possible, how is a stranger to make the best use of his time? This was the question which absorbed me during the last days of 1869, while the P. and O. steamer drew nearer and nearer to Bombay. Calcutta and the Duke of Edinburgh; the grand Durbar to be held by Lord Mayo in his royal highness's honour; the entertainment to be given on board Her Majesty's ship Galatea; the fancy dress ball and festivities at Government House; the pageantry and Oriental splendour, certain to follow upon the unexampled assemblage of native princes and potentates; and the historical importance of the visit to India of Queen Victoria's son—made it seem expedient, on the one hand, to start for the capital direct. But Calcutta was then a five days' journey from Bombay, so that, as my engagements made it necessary to leave for England from the latter port, ten days would have to be given up to mere travelling. The line which now connects the Great Indian Peninsula and East Indian Railways was not completed until three months later, when it was opened with great state by the Viceroy and the Duke of Edinburgh; and between Nagpore and Jubbulpore, a distance of one hundred and sixty-four miles, I should have to travel by dâk. Now the condition of my being in India was that I should form part of the British Indian Telegraph Expedition from thence to Suez, the date of the departure of which was uncertain; and if I went straight to Calcutta it might, possibly, happen that I should have to return to Bombay so soon, as to preclude my visiting any of the northern cities of India. If, however, I went up the country at once, I could, by travelling hard, see its chief places, and perhaps include Calcutta at the end of my tour, so that it seemed as if I had to choose between securing peeps at Delhi, Agra, Cawnpore, Lucknow, Benares, and other celebrated places, and witnessing the gorgeous ceremonials attending the Duke of Edinburgh's visit. Both prospects were so tempting that it was a relief, when we were met by the postal-boat off Mazagon pier, Bombay, to find the local newspapers full of accounts of the Durbar which had been held by Lord Mayo the day before. All hesitation vanished now, for the remaining festivities would be over before I could possibly reach Calcutta, and I determined to leave for Northern India at once.

There was on board the steamer a copy of the Indian Traveller's Guide, a sort of Bradshaw, which is published at the office of the Bombay Gazette, and which I found useful in many ways. Its pages were marked for me, and all that men could do to make my trip easy and pleasurable was cheerfully undertaken by my Anglo-Indian friends. There was a certain novelty to most of them in any one coming to India for a few weeks only, and travelling over it for pleasure, and the dearth of authentic and comprehensive guides to the country seemed, for the moment, to be compensated for by the friendly offices it evoked. The impossibility of procuring at Suez a copy of Murray's Handbook to India had been a great disappointment; and it was, I think, a still greater disappointment when I succeeded in purchasing that work at the great bookseller's on the Esplanade of Bombay, for I found its date to be 1859, and that it contained no information respecting Bengal or the North-West or Central Provinces. Murray's Palestine had been so essential to the enjoyment of our travels there, and was so correct in every detail, that the limitations of the Indian Handbook came upon me as a misfortune. Its two volumes treat only of the presidencies of Madras and Bombay, and as I had no intention of visiting the former, and proposed to leave the latter as speedily as possible, it was useless for the time. Above all, ten years had passed since it was published, and more since much of it was written; and how far these had made it obsolete may be gathered from this passage in Sir Charles Dilke's admirable book, Greater Britain: "The export of cotton from India rose from five millions' worth in 1859 to thirty-eight millions' worth in 1864, and the total exports of Bombay increased in the same propor-

tion, while the population of the city rose from four hundred thousand to one million. We are accustomed to look at the East as standing still," the same author adds pertinently, "but Chicago itself never took a grander leap than did Bombay between 1860 and 1864. The rebellion in America gave the impetus, but was not the sole cause of this prosperity; and the Indian cotton trade, though checked by the peace, is not destroyed. Cotton and jute are not the only Indian raw produce, the exports of which have increased suddenly of late. The export of wool increased twenty-fold, of tobacco threefold, of coffee sevenfold, in the last six years; and the export of Indian tea increased in five years from nothing to three or four hundred thousand pounds."

These figures are fair examples of the deficiencies inseparable from a guide-book which is ten or a dozen years old, when the country with which it deals has been marching onwards rapidly. My first railway ride was to be five hundred and nineteen miles inland to Nagpore, and Murray informed me that but eighty-eight and a half miles of the line were finished, and the rest "under construction," while my recent experience of the overland route told me too surely that in particulars which are all-important to the tourist, the same authority had been put utterly in the wrong by time. It gave elaborate descriptions of the journey across the Egyptian desert in vans, the route of which could be "traced by the skeletons of camels, thousands upon thousands of which lie bleaching by the wayside;" of the "conveyance of travellers to India from Alexandria to Suez, by way of Cairo;" of Egyptian hotels, "permanently maintained for the sake of employment one day in seven;" and the landlords of which, "unless when the passengers are on the way, are wholly idle;" of "luggage being forwarded on camels;" of "quitting Suez, where a long pull of nearly two miles, through shallows and intricate channels, takes the traveller to the roadstead, where the steamer awaits his reception;" of the "magnificent steamers of the Oriental Navigation Company," which take all passengers as far as Aden, when those for Calcutta remain on board, while "Bombay passengers are conveyed by the packets or war steamers of the Indian navy;" all of which descriptions have become as obsolete as stories of the risks from highwaymen on the road from London to York. Now-a-days, all the direct overland traveller sees of the desert is from the windows of his railway carriage. He does not go near Cairo, or obtain a glimpse of the Pyramids, but proceeds from Alexandria to the junction of Zag-a-Zoug, and from thence to Suez. The hotels of Egypt drive a busy trade the year round, for European travellers and speculators are never wanting in the land; your luggage is conveyed by train from disembarkation to re-shipment as prosaically as to Southampton; you step from the new wharf at Suez to a steamer moored alongside; and there is neither an Indian navy nor changing steamers at Aden by the passengers for Bombay. These are types of many other equally important changes and modifications, and for my tour in India it was clear that Murray would be of little use. The really serious part of the case was that I could meet with no handbook giving the information I sought. The courteous Mr. Thacker not only had none such in stock, but when I inquired as to the possibility of ordering one from Calcutta by telegraph, to be despatched to meet me up the country, I was told that no work of the kind was published, and that I must content myself with Greater Britain (which was all I could wish, as far as it went, but which did not touch upon many of the places I was bound for), and with the memoranda supplied to me by friends. This seemed for the moment a really staggering rebuff. Trustworthy information, based on recent data or experience, appeared impossible of attainment. None of the people to whom I had introductions at Bombay had ever been over the ground, and such information as I had gathered as to routes and facilities might have been all altered by time. The antiquities and archæological treasures of Northern India; the mosques, the tombs, the palaces, the ghauts, the buildings and sites rendered sacred in English eyes by the heroism evoked by the mutiny—how was I to avoid missing these if I were unable to read up and instruct myself before arriving at, and during my sojourn in, each city? It seemed certain that I should overlook much of what I ought to examine studiously, but there was no help for it and no time to be lost, so I set about my arrangements for starting next day.

I subsequently spent some weeks at Bombay; but the sight of it as we steamed into its magnificent harbour, and the hasty impressions derived as I drove from pier to hotel, from warehouse to shop, from railway station to dâk office, and from count-

ing-house to bungalow, stand out quite as vividly as any of the social experiences I enjoyed later. There was the view of land in the early morning, the hurrying on deck for the first peep of India, and the stacking by the bulwarks of the masses of huge mail-bags, representing so much anxiety and happiness, of sorrow and joy, for thousands of the expatriated, and causing the arrival of our steamer to be telegraphed to the remotest parts of India. There was, too, the indescribable stir and bustle which precedes the breaking up and separation of people among whom has sprung up the odd intimacy begotten of life at sea; and amid all this organised confusion, one of the grandest views in the world became rapidly distinct. The enormous size of Bombay, the houses and spires of which stretch along the coast for miles; the forest of masts springing from a fleet composed of ships of every nationality; the bright colours and gay roofs of its mansions, reminding one of magnified toys; the English church on Colaba Point, which might have been first transplanted from a metropolitan suburb, so completely do its spire and nave remind one of home; the fisherman's stakes or posts sticking up out of the water, and looking like a laundry drying-ground out at sea; the miles of palm-groves covering the mountains down to the water's edge, and the line of massive hills in shadow which back up the city, including the natural formation which looks like a cathedral—all strike a stranger. British supremacy is brought home to you in a thousand forms, and this the more strongly if you have lingered in other Eastern countries on your way out. The traveller who takes his passage direct from England to India, misses the gratification which arises from finding yourself no longer one of a minority. Modern Egypt is a French colony. Shops, pleasures, pursuits, civilisation, vices, are all French, and the Englishman finds himself an alien, or at best a guest, who mingles much in the Egypto-European society of Alexandria or Cairo. Palestine, as a province of Turkey, has all the sombre characteristics of a Mahomedan-governed land; and the Frank is there made to feel that he is held inferior to the governing race, and that he must respect its prejudices and obey its behests, if he wish to travel safely and explore the country in peace.

India furnishes a great contrast to all this, and such little things as the familiar "F.P." for fire-plug let into the walls of houses, the numbers on the hack-buggies on the stands, the British uniforms, and the royal arms on the native constables' staves, all tell a story which you knew before, but which recent experiences of Oriental countries make doubly impressive. Shall I ever forget the sensation of hearing the chimes from a church clock, during an interval of wakefulness in my first night on shore? No such sound had reached me for months. The unearthly howls of the khavasse, watchmen who make night hideous at Alexandria; the barks and yelpings of the wild dog-scavengers of Cairo; the plaintive muezzin from the minaret of the mosque of Jerusalem; the cry of the jackal and the hooting of the owl when camping out in the wilderness; and latterly the ships' bells ringing out the half-hours—such had been the sounds greeting me whenever I lay awake at night. But a regular church clock, which struck the quarters, and had the true English tones, made the thousands of miles between me and those I loved disappear. Though so much further advanced into the East, you are continually reminded of home, and I was once advised quite earnestly to "hold my own with the natives, to stand no nonsense, and always to remember that my skin and language marked me as one of the governing class." This was said in all seriousness by a well-wishing "griff," or new arrival, before I had been in India an hour, and my preparations for a flight up country brought vividly before me many other strong contrasts between it and the Oriental lands I had just left.

SOME FAMOUS TREATIES.

When the Black Prince and his eight thousand knights and archers, refused all terms by an exulting army of fifty thousand French, bore down from the vineyard hill at Poitiers, on which they had been pent, and beat the enemy to pieces, the result to France was more deplorable than even that of Sedan. A truce of two years followed, which was terminated by the peace of Bretigny. France being peeled too bare to any longer support an invading army, the French consented at last to the cruel conditions enforced by this treaty. It was stipulated that King John (then a prisoner in the palace of the Savoy in the Strand) should pay three million gold crowns for his ransom. King Edward renounced for ever his somewhat shaky claims to the crown of France, and the provinces of

Normandy, Maine, Touraine, and Anjou, possessed by his ancestors, in exchange for the provinces of Poictou, Guienne, Saintonge, l'Agenois, Perigord, the Limousin, Quercy, together with Calais, Guisnes, Montreuil, and the country of Ponthieu. This spoil, forming nearly half of France, was to be held by England in complete sovereignty, without even homage to the French king. The natural results followed these ungenerous and extortionate claims. When King Edward grew old, and the Black Prince returned from Paris, disgusted with his faithless allies, loaded with debt, and already ailing with the consumption of which he eventually died, the French at once overran our recent conquests, and in a few years won back all but Bourdeaux, Bayonne, and Calais. At the very time that King John lay our prisoner at the Savoy, we had also a King of Scotland captive, whom Edward liberated on the payment of one hundred thousand marks.

But, taking a stride of several centuries, let us pass on to the peace of Cambray. The jealous rivalry of Francis the First and the Emperor Charles the Fifth for the imperial crown, had finally led to an alliance between England, Charles, and the Pope, against Francis. The splendour and flatteries of the Field of the Cloth-of-Gold had been wasted on Wolsey, who trusted to Charles to help him to the triple crown. Milan was taken, Parma and Placentia were conquered by Prosper Colonna, and, of all Lombardy, Cremona and a few forts were soon all that was left to France. At Pavia, Francis lost everything but honour. Rome was taken and sacked by the imperialists. The French lost another army in Italy and were smitten to the ground; but circumstances at that crisis began then to favour them. Henry now inclined to the side of France, the Reformation convulsed Germany, the Turks overran Hungary and threatened Vienna. Peace was necessary for Charles, and his aunt and the mother of Francis were allowed to arrange terms. The peace of Cambray followed, by which Francis agreed to pay two millions of crowns as the ransom of his two sons, to resign the sovereignty of Flanders and Artois, and to forego all his claims to Italy, on condition that Charles ceased to demand the restitution of Burgundy.

The great peace of Passau established German Protestantism for the first time on a firm basis. The princes of the Smalcaldic League, dissatisfied with the one-sided Council of Trent, and seeing the emperor secretly taking arms, assembled (the year Luther, their great apostle, died) seventy thousand foot and fifteen hundred horse, prepared to win by force the toleration they could not otherwise obtain. By the aid of Maurice of Saxony, the emperor one by one broke the links of the league, but Maurice, growing alarmed at the emperor's ambition, soon proved a subtle and dangerous enemy, and all but surprised the emperor at Inspruck. The treaty of Passau soon followed, admitting Protestants to a share in all Catholic liberties.

In the early part of the reign of Edward the Sixth, the Earl of Warwick concluded a peace between France and Scotland. By the previous treaty of Campe, in the reign of Henry the Eighth, it had been stipulated that France owed England two million crowns, arrears of former debts. But as this sum did not amount to more than one-third of what Henry had expended in war on France, Boulogne was left in English hands as a security for the debt. By Warwick's treaty four hundred thousand crowns were taken as an equivalent for this debt, and Boulogne and its territory restored to France.

The long wars between France and the emperor terminated in the peace of Château Cambresis, in 1559. Charles, attempting to win back Metz, Toul, and Verdun, had been signally repulsed from Metz by the young Duke of Guise. The Duke of Savoy, at the head of a Spanish army, invaded France, but, delayed by Coligny's brave defence of St. Quentin, outside which town the French lost a battle, wasted his opportunity of marching on Paris. On the death of his father, Philip determined on peace. Protecting the rights of Elizabeth, our English claims were first considered at Cambresis. France, it was agreed, was to hold Calais for eight years, and then to surrender it to England. Savoy and Piedmont were to be restored to Emanuel Philibert, France was to evacuate all the places which she held in Tuscany and Sienna, and to surrender to Genoa all the towns of Corsica. Finally, France was allowed to retain Metz, Toul, and Verdun.

But the greatest of all these treaties was the treaty of Westphalia, signed at Munster in 1648. This treaty closed the Thirty Years' War between Sweden and Germany, in which Tilly and Gustavus Adolphus had both perished, and by which half Europe had been devastated. Mazarin had succeeded Richelieu, and yet this terrible strife

had continued, drawing in, one after another, almost every European power. The last great exploits of this war had been the famous victory at Rocroi, which Condé won over the famous Spanish and Walloon infantry, and the loss of half a French army in Swabia. Turenne was mounting for fresh victories. Torstenson, the Swede, had just invaded Holstein to punish Denmark for her concealed hostility, when the negotiations commenced.

By this famous treaty, France was to hold Metz, Toul, Verdun, Brissac, and all Upper and Lower Alsace. Sweden received four millions of crowns, Bremen, Verdun, Upper Pomerania, Stettin, the Isle of Rugen, and the city of Wismar. The Elector of Brandenburg, as recompense for the loss of Upper Pomerania, was to receive the bishopric of Brandenburg, and the bishoprics of Halberstadt, Minden, and Camin. The Duke of Bavaria was to be elector, with the Upper Palatinate, and Charles Louis an eighth elector, with the Lower Palatinate. The Swiss republic was also declared a sovereign estate, exempt from the jurisdiction of the empire.

The treaty of the Pyrenees terminated, in 1659, the long wars between France and Spain. Under Mazarin's administration, Turenne had forced the Spanish lines at Arras; but Condé saved the shattered army. Condé soon afterwards, at Valenciennes, turned the tables on Turenne; but that great general was never greater than after a defeat. Soon afterwards, Turenne defeated Condé, and took Dunkirk, which Condé was endeavouring to relieve. The peace which Mazarin concluded arranged for the marriage of the young French king and the Infanta of Spain. Louis agreed to pardon Condé, Philip to forgive the Catalonians who had rebelled, and finally Spain renounced all pretensions to Alsace.

On the death of Philip the Second of Spain, in 1665, Louis the Fourteenth instantly set his foot on the treaty of the Pyrenees, and claimed for his wife the duchy of Brabant, till the death of a sickly child should leave him free to seize also the Spanish throne. Turenne and forty thousand men swept into Flanders, and took fortress after fortress. After Charleroy, Tournay; after Tournay, Courtray; after Courtray, Douary. Lille fell in nine days. By the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, Louis retained all the towns he had conquered except those of Franche Comté.

England being won over to Louis by the most disgraceful intrigues, the French instantly invaded Holland. The Dutch, inundating their country, and resolved rather to emigrate in one vast fleet than yield to France, were bravely led by the Prince of Orange, who declared that he would die disputing the last ditch. Then came Turenne's cruelties in the Palatinate, and many brave fights at sea between the Dutch, and the French and English. The Prince of Orange, constantly defeated, still made a head, till France began to grow exhausted. The English people were urging Charles to join the Dutch, and stop the progress of French ambition. The treaty of Nimeguen secured to France not only Franche Comté, but Cambray, St. Omer, Valenciennes, Tournay, Cassel, Charlemont, &c. The States were to have Maestricht again, and Spain Oudenarde, Ghent, and Limbourg. The emperor was to retain Philipsburg, and to surrender Freyburg, and the Elector of Brandenburg was to restore his Pomeranian conquests to Sweden.

The next great settlement of European quarrels was that famous patching up of old wrangles at Ryswick. Catinot had conquered Savoy, and the combined fleets of Holland and England had been defeated off Beechy Head. The French had taken Namur under the very eyes of William, and had defeated the allies at Steinkirk and Neerwinden. The great Smyrna fleet had been attacked while under our convoy, and twelve hundred thousand pounds' worth of property destroyed. The war ended, however, with William's taking Namur, a stroke that partly recovered the glory that he had lost in three previous campaigns. By the treaty Louis acknowledged William to be the lawful sovereign of England, and restored Charleroy, Mons, Courtray, and Luxembourg, and several Catalonian cities to Spain; he gave up Freiburg, Brissac, and Philipsburg to the emperor; and the duchies of Lorraine and Bar to their native prince.

The subsequent tremendous victory over the Turks at Zenta, by Prince Eugene, led to the peace of Carlowitz, by which Austria secured Hungary, Russia Azof, the Poles Podolia, and the Venetians the Peloponnesus, and several towns in Dalmatia.

Marlborough's great victories at Oudenarde, Blenheim, and Malplaquet, ultimately led to the great pacification at Utrecht. By this treaty, France surrendered her right to the Spanish succession; Savoy acquired Nice; Prussia, acknowledged as a kingdom, was to receive Spanish Guelderland and Neufchatel in exchange for

the principality of Orange and the lordship of Chalon; the Rhine was to be the boundary of the German empire; Luxembourg, Namur, and Charleroy were to be given the States General as a barrier; and Lille, Aire, Bethune, and St. Venant were to be restored to France; while England was to retain Nova Scotia, St. Christopher's, Hudson's Bay, Newfoundland, Minorca, and Gibraltar; and to her also was granted the profitable assiento or contract for furnishing the Spanish colonies in South America with negroes for the term of thirty years. The emperor, holding out against these terms, had finally to sign the peace of Rustadt, and obtained far less favourable conditions, and had to cede Landau and other Rhenish fortresses to France. Bavaria relinquished Sardinia to the emperor in return for the Upper Palatinate, and France acknowledged the electoral dignity of the Duke of Hanover.

The treaty of Breslau was that peace won for Frederick the Great by the unexpected victory at Czaslau. It secured for Prussia the cession of Upper and Lower Silesia, and the country of Glatz, and it withdrew the Queen of Hungary from her alliance with France.

Pitt's long war with France terminated in 1763 by the treaty of Paris, that, much as it was railed against by the Whigs, gave us a vast increase of colonial territory. France ceded to us Canada and a part of Louisiana. Spain gave up Florida for the Havannah and Minorca; France yielded her forts on the Senegal and the Island of Granada, and gave up her claim to the neutral islands of St. Vincent, Dominica, and Tobago; in return we surrendered to France St. Lucia and Pondicherry.

The treaty of Campo Formio closed the first series of campaigns carried on by Napoleon against Austria. The French had been victorious at Arcola and Rivoli, and Mantua, that powerful fortress, had surrendered to their arms. Bonaparte had invaded the Papal territories, undaunted by the sanctity of the successor of St. Peter, and had trodden Venice under foot. At Leoben it was originally proposed that Austria should have certain compensation beyond the River Oglio for ceding to France Flanders and all the countries on the left side of the Rhine, including the strong city of Mayence. The Venetian territories on the mainland were also to be given to Austria, who was to retain Mantua, while to Venice was to be handed over the legations of Bologna, Ferrara, and Romagna. But when the Venetians rose on the French, and the massacre at Verona took place, Napoleon had no more mercy on Venice, and at once divided her dominions between France and Austria, France taking the Albanian territories and some of the Ionian Islands, and Austria swallowing Istria, Dalmatia, and Venice herself. Napoleon also claimed Mantua and the line of the Adige, and when Cobenzel, the Austrian ambassador, hesitated, he took from a bracket a china vase of value, given Cobenzel by the Empress Catherine, and dashed it on the hearthstone.

"The truce is then ended," he thundered. "Before the end of autumn I will break your empire into as many fragments as this potsherd."

The Austrians gave way, and the treaty of Campo Formio was signed the following day.

The next war with Austria, closing with the great blow at Marengo, and Moreau's brilliant victory at Hohenlinden, was patched up at Luneville, in spite of the urgent entreaties of England to Austria to continue the war—entreaties which were backed up by a loan of two millions. By this treaty Austria ceded Tuscany to a prince of the House of Parma, and the whole left bank of the Rhine was ceded to the French Republic, the German princes who suffered, to be repaid by indemnities allotted them at the expense of the Germanic body in general.

Then came the Egyptian campaign, the reduction of Malta by the English, and the attack of the Danish fleet by Nelson, till in 1802 the peace of Amiens gave peace for a time to bleeding Europe. The nations needed repose. England, moderate in her demands of all her conquests, retained only Ceylon and Trinidad. Portugal lost Olivenza and a part of Guiana; Corfu, and six other islands, were constituted into a republic, and Malta was to be restored to the knights.

The treaty of Presburgh was the sequence to the overwhelming victory of Austerlitz. The first preliminary was the payment of one hundred millions of francs by Austria. The Tyrol was ceded to Bavaria, and Venice was annexed to the kingdom of Italy. By this treaty Austria lost twenty thousand square miles of territory, two millions and a half of subjects, and a revenue reaching two millions and a half of florins. Such was the result of a six months' campaign, and one great victory.

Every treaty of Napoleon's marked the close of some series of tremendous victories. That of Tilsit reconciled him to Russia.

The terms weighed heavy on Prussia. From that down-crushed kingdom was wrested the portion of Poland acquired by the partition of 1772, and this portion was to be called the Grand Duchy of Nassau. Russia acquired the province of Bialystock, and Dantzic was made a free city.

By the peace signed at Schönbrun in 1809 Napoleon passed Austria under the same harrow, which he had previously drawn over Prussia. At one stroke of the pen Austria surrendered forty-five thousand square miles of territory, and a population of between three and four millions. Napoleon was at first resolved to wrench from the Austrian empire both Hungary and Bohemia, but at the last moment he spared her from actual dismemberment. Eventually Austria ceded Saltsburg and part of the Upper Rhine to the Princes of the Confederation of the Rhine. To France she surrendered Trieste, Carniola, Friuli, the circle of Villach, and some parts of Croatia and Dalmatia. To the King of Saxony she sullenly yielded part of Bohemia, Cracow, and the whole of Western Galicia, while Russia took Eastern Galicia, with a population of four hundred thousand souls.

Such are a few of the celebrated treaties which have been knotted and woven by astute diplomatists, but which have always yielded like cobwebs to the swords of conquerors.

MY NEW IDEA.

DEDICATED TO MM. LES CHEVALIERS D'INDUSTRIE.

IN TWO PARTS. PART II.

My first proceeding in connexion with the execution of my great idea was to go to a certain great stationer's shop in Oxford-street, where I purchased a handsome photographic album, of a large size and a square shape. I selected a volume—and here let me solicit the special attention of all who may peruse this statement—the cardboard leaves of which were rather thin, and which had underneath each of the spaces designed for the reception of the card portraits a long, ornamentally shaped opening, through which it was intended that the photograph should be pushed up into its place, but designed by me to fulfil another purpose as well.

My next act was to collect from my friends as many of their portraits, in the form of cartes de visite, as I could possibly get together. I had purposely given out that it was my intention—as indeed it was—to set off very shortly on a long journey. My tour was to include America and the colonies, and was to be undertaken with a view of increasing the stock of information with which it was my intention to set up in business one day, as a politician. Before starting on such an expedition it was natural that I should wish to carry with me some remembrances of the friends who had shown me so much kindness in England, and therefore it was that I made such a point of making my collection of photographic portraits complete. There were some of my City friends, who had attained, by the magnitude of their financial operations, to the position of merchant princes, whose likenesses I was particularly anxious to secure, as it would be natural that any new acquaintances whom I might make in the course of my travels would be interested in seeing what such world-renowned capitalists were like.

When I am once embarked in an undertaking, it is part of my nature to do what I do thoroughly. I had set my mind, as I have already said, on the consummating of a great idea, and I determined to carry it out on a great scale. I was about to part from a set of friends and acquaintances who had shown me great hospitality, and before leaving England I was resolved to make some return for that hospitality. I determined that the form which my acknowledgment should take was to be a handsome breakfast, luncheon, collation, whatever you like to call it, an elegant and, at the same time, a substantial meal, with tea and coffee at one end of the table, and wine at the other, to which the guests should be invited to sit down, at twelve o'clock, on a certain day early in the month of June. I had some difficulty in securing the attendance of my City friends at the early hour which I have mentioned, but I did manage at last to make all those whose presence I most wished for promise to partake of my déjeuner.

I flatter myself that it was decidedly a brilliant thing, that breakfast party of mine. We were extremely gay and talkative. I had—knowing that my mind was likely to be somewhat preoccupied—prepared my conversation beforehand, and had so many conversational crackers ready to let off, that I was able to throw a firework or two, as occasion required, to any friend who appeared in straits, and so to keep the talk from flagging even for a moment. By the time that the champagne had been round twice, we had attained the fullest measure of good-fellowship, and were all in the highest good-humour with each other.

It was at this moment that I rose from my seat, and commenced an address to the assembled company. I told them that I was not going to make a speech, that such a proceeding was contrary alike to my principles and my capacity. All I was going to do was to express—very inadequately I feared—my profound sense of the extraordinary kindness which I had met with during my residence in London, and the remembrance of which would ever remain indelibly inscribed on the tablets, &c. &c. I purposely leave out a great deal of what I said, about this time, on such subjects as friendship, hospitality, partings, absence, "dragging at each remove a lengthening chain," and the like, and come to the concluding portion of my address, which—developing as it does the nature of that great idea of which I have said so much—seems to me worthy to be repeated word for word.

"I am about," I said, "to take leave of you all certainly for a considerable time, and 'it may be,' in the words of the song, 'for ever.' Before doing so, or perhaps I should rather say in doing so, I have one final and most urgent request to make, with which I feel convinced beforehand that you will all most readily comply. I have here a volume"—and at this point I laid my hand upon my album, which I had previously placed within reach—"I have here a volume in which are inserted the portraits of the greater number of my friends and acquaintances, besides those whom the ties of relationship have naturally endeared to me. The portraits of all of you who are here present to-day are, I need hardly say, included in this collection, and it is in reference to them that I have to make the request of which I have just spoken. It is my wish, in order to render the gratification which I shall hereafter derive from their contemplation complete, that—that——" here my voice grew husky, and I was obliged to moisten my lips with a little water—"that, in short, you will each one of you favour me by inscribing your names (in full) under your portraits, in order that I may not only see the outward presentment of each, but also something which is, as it were, an emanation of each individual's own personality." I am not sure that I quite knew what was intended to be conveyed by these last few words, but I was a little confused, I don't mind owning, and my emotions (of various kinds) were too much for me. There was a general murmur of assent to my proposal which much affected me, and it was in a broken voice that I requested one of the waiters who was in attendance to bring forward the inkstand, which, like the photographic album, I had taken care to have handy.

We had a good deal of laughing and joking on this signing business, which I superintended individually in every case. Such superintendence was a most necessary part of the proceeding, for, there being a place specially marked and set aside to contain each one's signature, it is of course unnecessary to say that everybody wanted to append his or her autograph anywhere else, at any inconvenience. They made "offers" at the space above the photograph, and at the space below it, and even wanted to screw their names into the narrow strip of cardboard between the bottom of the portrait and the little ornamented opening, a short distance beneath which was specially intended to receive the writing, the paper contained within its limits being of the sort ordinarily used for writing on, and very preferable for the purpose to the cardboard, of which the rest of each page was composed. It was quite a troublesome task to keep the autographists within their proper limits, but I was very peremptory—though jocosely so, of course—upon the subject. Indeed, I was a good deal troubled altogether. One lady, possessed of a gushing nature, was going to introduce the words "Yours sincerely" before her signature, and it was only by urging the necessity of uniformity, that I was able to arrest the establishment of a precedent, which, if generally followed, would—as will appear hereafter—have been fatal to my prospects. This was really an anxious time for me in many ways. One old gentleman asked me whether I would have his business signature or his familiar and friendly one, which was much abbreviated. It was a staggering question, but I retained my presence of mind, and replied that if it was only for my own gratification of course I should prefer the latter, but that I felt sure that those to whom I might show the autograph in far-off countries, and who would all know the renowned financialist by name, would wish to see that name signed as it ordinarily appeared in those documents by which the commercial interests of Europe, nay of the world itself, were so materially and so continually affected. I was in a cold perspiration while I spoke, for any mistake here would certainly have considerably imperilled the chance of my great idea.

Well it was, as I have said, an anxious time for me, but it came to an end, and

in due time all the signatures which I required were appended to the portraits to which they were appropriate. When the last was dried and blotted, I closed the album and pressed it against my heart. "You don't know," I said, looking round upon my friends with an affectionate glance, "you don't know what this book will be to me." And indeed they did not.

As soon as the last of my guests was gone—they left with many expressions of goodwill almost immediately after the signing business was over—I seized the album and rushed off with it to my bedroom, locking the door of that apartment as soon as I got inside. Pausing then for one instant—but only for one, as I had much to do, and little time to do it in—I got my ideas together, and then seating myself at my writing-table, with the photograph book open before me, set myself to work to complete the task which had been so auspiciously begun.

I have already remarked that in purchasing my album I had selected one, the cardboard leaves of which were rather thinner than they generally are, and I have also mentioned that underneath each of the open spaces intended to contain the portraits there was a long horizontal slit or aperture, by means of which the photographs were introduced into their places. I must now go a step further, and state the fact that I had with great care fastened each leaf to the one next it, gluing the extreme edges only. Before sticking the leaves together thus, however, I had done something else which must be mentioned in this place, and to which especial attention is requested.

At all stationers' shops, in the metropolis and elsewhere, there are sold, at the rate of one penny each, certain long narrow strips of paper, stamped with the government stamp, and on which either a receipt or a CHEQUE (!) may be written with equal propriety. Of these I purchased a half-dozen and placed them behind six of the portraits contained in my album. Then I glued, as I have said, the edges of the page thus prepared to the edges of the page next it, and this being done it will be understood, if I have succeeded in making myself intelligible, that a portion of every one of these slips appeared through the aperture which I have described as occupying a horizontal position directly under each photograph. I have now to add that the portion of the slip of stamped paper thus exposed was in every case the right-hand lower corner, and I may also mention that the six portraits to which they were appended were those of six of the wealthiest of the guests who were to grace the festive board on the occasion of my farewell breakfast. As for the other portraits of friends who were not capitalists, the paper which appeared through the apertures underneath their photographs was exactly of the same make as that used for the others, but it was not stamped. Why should it be?

Have I made myself understood, and is some notion of the nature of my great idea beginning to become apparent? If so, it will be almost unnecessary for me to state that when with my penknife I carefully separated the edges of the leaves which a short time before I had as carefully fastened together, I found my six slips of stamped paper lying snugly before me, each with the name of a great capitalist written by that capitalist's own hand in the legitimate spot for the signature of a cheque, low down, and at the right-hand side.

What my sensations were as I contemplated those slips may be imagined by those who, by some sudden turn of fortune's wheel, have been in a moment raised from poverty to affluence. There lay untold wealth within my reach. Money, to almost any extent, was represented by slips of paper. Those names meant money—every letter of them—it was enough to make one's brain reel to think of it.

I had no time, however, to spend in such weaknesses as brain-reeling. It was half-past two, the banks would close at four, and I had business of importance to transact before that hour, having to leave for Liverpool (en route to the United States) by the evening mail. So I sat down to my table, with my slips of stamped paper before me, and proceeded to convert them into cheques on the bankers—I had of course taken care to ascertain in each case who they were—of the illustrious men whose names were inscribed on each.

And here let me pause for a moment to make a small explanation which may perhaps appear to be not uncalled for. It is possible that some person or persons in whose way this narrative may hereafter come, may so far misunderstand this proceeding of mine as to accuse me of—I can hardly bring myself to write the word—of dishonesty. Let me proceed at once to clear myself from a charge so monstrous and unfounded. The act in which I was engaged when converting those slips of paper into cheques on my friends' bankers, was simply that of effecting a loan. I regarded each of these capitalists, of whom I

was about to procure a temporary accommodation, in the light of one who was about unconsciously, and, as it were, involuntarily, to lend me a sum of money of which I for the moment stood in need. But why not —the reader will perhaps say—why not have negotiated the loan in the usual way, requesting the consent of the parties to the transaction? My answer is ready: because I have, as I have before intimated, a proud and independent nature, and an invincible repugnance to asking favours. Besides, if I had asked for a loan in the manner suggested, it might have been refused, and what an exceedingly awkward thing that would have been!

Regarding this—this—transaction, then, in the light of a loan, which I should one of these days repay with interest, at the rate of five per cent per annum, all on a business-like footing, I determined to be moderate. I calculated that a sum of two thousand pounds would be enough to meet all the expenses I should have to incur, and leave me a handsome balance with which to make a start in the New World, and this I intended to get together thus: Six friends had accommodated me—so to speak—with these bank cheques; one of them, Sir Percy Jingle, was a man of quite enormous wealth; the other five, though all very rich, were not absolutely millionaires as was the case with Sir P. J. I determined, then, to draw on each of these gentlemen to an extent proportionate to his means. Sir Percy Jingle should accommodate me with a thousand pounds, right off, and the other five with a couple of hundred each, which would exactly make up the sum which I required. Having settled this question in my own mind, I sat down quickly and wrote off the six cheques in no time.

I was not long over my cheques, writing them off glibly enough till I came to the last, and then I confess I did hesitate for a moment. It was the Jingle cheque for a thousand pounds. The sum was so large. Suppose there should be any hitch about it? Hitch, nonsense! It was large to me, no doubt, but not large to Jingle—not large to Jingle's bankers. Did not I know on what a scale things of this sort were conducted among really rich men? Had not a clerk at Goldchild's told me the other day of the Marquis of H. walking in there quite quietly, presenting a cheque for forty thousand pounds, and just thrusting the notes into his pocket and walking out again as if nothing had happened? I soon silenced my doubts with reflections of this sort, and getting out into the street, called a hansom cab, and set off upon a round of visits to the different banking establishments on which my cheques were drawn.

Nothing could be pleasanter than such a succession of calls. I came out of each of those first five places of business exactly two hundred pounds richer than I went in, and when I emerged from the last of them I had no less in all than a thousand pounds buttoned up in my breast-pocket. I had never had so large a sum in my possession in my life, nor anything approaching it. The notes made quite a fat bundle, and I could feel them pressing in a lump against my heart. Somehow they did not seem to soothe or tranquillise its action, though, but quite the reverse.

My great coup, however, remained still to be made. I had delayed the cashing of my large cheque, as I had delayed the writing of it, to the last. A curious sort of hesitation had possessed me in connexion with it all along, and it held me still. I loitered on my way to the bank, which was not a City house, but one of world-wide renown at the West-end. I loitered, and hesitated, and, for a moment even, found myself doubting whether, after all, I would present the cheque at all. Suppose I rested satisfied with what I had got? It was a large sum. It would set me going, at any rate, and even keep me afloat for a certain length of time.

Thus, for awhile, I hesitated, yielding in a pusillanimous way to my fears and scruples instead of fighting against them with all my might, as I should have done. In a word, I lost so much time in consequence of my indecision, that before I got to the establishment of Messrs. Bullion and Co. the chimes of the neighbouring church of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields had struck the hour of four, and when I reached the doors they were closed.

I suppose there are other people besides myself in the world who, after remaining long undecided which of two courses it would be best to choose, have felt, directly one of those courses has become impossible of adoption, that it was beyond all doubt the right one, and that they would now give anything to have still the power of selecting it. As far as I am concerned, I may safely say that this is invariably my experience, and on this particular occasion it was so in a special degree. Why had I hesitated? I asked myself. Had I taken all these pains and run all this risk—for there could be no doubt that there was risk,

and that in the eye of the law my idea of negotiating an involuntary loan would be entirely misunderstood—had I done all this, and was nothing to come of it, after all? Was I actually going to throw away a thousand pounds, when it was within my grasp?

I continued to question myself in this indignant fashion till at last I worked myself up into such a rage at my own weakness and folly, that I resolved, intolerable as I knew the delay would be to me, to remain that night in London, in order that I might cash my cheque the next day. I should still be in time for the American boat if I went down to Liverpool by one of the morning trains.

It may easily be imagined what sort of a time I had of it that evening, and during the night which ensued. I did not like to go back to my lodgings, having a general sense upon me that it was desirable that I should keep out of the way, and not be found by any one who might want me. Acting upon this principle, I went and ordered a dinner (which I could not eat) at an obscure chop-house in the City, and then at a later hour hired a bed (in which I could not sleep) at the New Hummums.

That night seemed interminable, and so did the morning which followed. I thought nine o'clock would never come. It seemed to me, at that moment, a ridiculously late hour at which to begin business, though I have no doubt that the subject strikes those who take their seats at a desk at that hour every morning in a different light.

Something of a relapse into the hesitating condition which I had fallen into the day before came upon me when the moment at length arrived for making my great attempt. This time, however, I did not yield to it. I waited till I conceived that the establishment might reasonably be supposed to have got into working order, and then, assuming as bold a front as I could call up, I walked in. I thought, by-the-bye, that the policeman who always stands in the doorway at Bullion and Co.'s (ridiculous custom) regarded me with attention as I passed in.

I must confess that at this moment, as I advanced towards the counter, I felt a strange presentiment of evil; my finger-tips were cold, and my knees were shaky, and my voice, as in presenting the cheque I uttered the words, "I'll take it in hundred-pound notes," sounded to me like somebody else's.

As I gave in my cheque I observed, or thought I did, that the clerk to whom I handed it exchanged a glance with another who stood next him, and that he made a gesture to a messenger, dressed in a sort of livery, who was waiting near the door, and who immediately went out. Then he bent across the counter, and looking me very steadily in the face, said, "This cheque is for an unusually large sum; perhaps you will have the kindness to follow me into one of the inner rooms;" and he came out from behind his desk, as he spoke, and led the way towards a passage connecting the outer with the inner offices. At this moment I certainly had serious thoughts of bolting, but I remembered the messenger and the signal which had been given him, and also that when I had last seen that functionary he was hurrying along in the direction of the doorway in which that ridiculous policeman was standing, and through which I should have to pass if I attempted to make my escape. There was nothing for it but to follow my conductor.

Messrs. Bullion's cashier led the way into a small room of unprepossessing appearance, containing a square table with an inkstand upon it, two chairs, and a tall desk standing in a corner. There was a sheet almanack over the chimney-piece, and the window was ornamented with iron bars. The cashier closed the door as soon as we had entered, and then turning upon me very suddenly, said:

"We have this morning received a communication from Messrs. Ingot and Co."—alas! it was there that my first cheque had been cashed—"in reference to a cheque which you presented there yesterday, and in connexion with which there seems reason to apprehend some kind of foul play. The party in whose name the cheque was drawn happened to call at the bank soon after it had been cashed, wishing to examine the state of his account, and he at once declared that he knew nothing whatever of the cheque, and that he had certainly not drawn it, or indeed any other on the day on which it was dated."

There was a low tap at the door at this moment, to which my companion responded with the words "All right;" then seeing me look round hastily, in the direction of the door, he added, addressing me, "Any attempt to escape will be perfectly useless; there is a policeman outside the door, and another within call."

"Policeman," I echoed; "escape! May I ask what you mean, sir?" I had recovered

myself a little, and was determined not to give in without a struggle, at any rate.

"What I mean is simply this," was the reply. "Messrs. Ingot have cashed a cheque, of which the person by whom it purports to be signed disclaims all knowledge; and, further, on sending round to certain other houses of business, which they did at once, they found that, in more than one instance, similar payments had been made of cheques drawn in your favour, and of which, on inquiry, it was found that the respective owners of the accounts on which they were drawn knew nothing. Under these circumstances the only conclusion which could possibly be arrived at was that the cheques in question were forgeries."

"They are not forgeries," I answered, indignantly. "Do you suppose that that cheque in your hand is a forgery? Look at it—that is all—look at it."

The cashier glanced carelessly at the document in his hand. "The signature is very like that of Sir Percy Jingle, no doubt," he said. "I am not here, however," he added, "to discuss the question of its likeness or unlikeness, but simply to act upon my instructions." And with that he went to the door of the room and called in the policeman who was waiting outside.

I am only saying what has often been said before, when I state the fact that the little room seemed at this juncture to turn round with me. Things really did become in some degree indistinct to me. I found myself in certain places, and involved in certain circumstances, without exactly knowing how I got to be so placed, or how I came to be so circumstanced. I found myself in a cab with a couple of policemen opposite me, and I found myself in a police-court with a great many people staring at me—among them certain of my guests of the day before—and then I found myself in a vehicle which reminded me painfully of my "seclusion" omnibus, only it had a policeman for driver, and another policeman for conductor, and then, at a later period of the day, I found myself in jail.

The rest of my story is soon told. My case came on, in due time, for trial, and I was indicted for forgery, and obtaining money under false pretences. We had rare fun while the first of these counts was being disposed of. My counsel was a capital fellow, with whom under other circumstances I had been well acquainted, and he entered into the spirit of the thing thoroughly. I had, of course, made him acquainted with the exact state of the case in connexion with the manner in which I had got the signatures, and he took much pleasure in the mystified condition of everybody connected with the prosecution as to how those signatures had been obtained. He kept up the mystification as long as he possibly could, till, finding the case going against him, he at last revealed the whole of my scheme, producing my photographic album in court, and handing it to me as I stood in the dock, in order that I might fit the cheques into the places which they had originally occupied, and otherwise illustrate the process by which I had gained my object.

"You cannot call this man a forger, gentlemen," he said, at the conclusion of his address. "The learned judge himself will tell you that you cannot. Whose name has he forged? Whose hand-writing has he counterfeited?"

There was immense mirth displayed in the body of the court during this part of my advocate's speech, and such a tendency to applause manifested, that the judge had to threaten to clear the court before it could be suppressed.

I was acquitted, then, on this count, but in connexion with the second charge of obtaining money under false pretences I was less fortunate. Under this head I was found guilty, and sentenced to an amount of penal servitude, which very speedily repressed any mirthful tendencies which had manifested themselves in my demeanour during other parts of the trial.

I am hors de combat, then, for the present, but I do not mean to remain so. On the contrary, I intend to be out in the world again in the course of a year or two, and by that time perhaps I may find the public ready to receive both the "oval pill" and the "seclusion" omnibus in a liberal spirit.

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THE ROSE AND THE KEY.

CHAPTER XXVIII. INQUIRY.

Turning into another walk, at her left, she approached the house, and saw Maud looking about her, as she stood in the midst of the scarlet and blue verbenas in the Dutch garden at the side of the Hall.

She signed to the old lady, smiling, as she emerged.

"I have been looking all round for you, and almost repenting I had not gone with you. I really began to think he had run away with you."

"Walked away, you mean; he does everything deliberately. He never ran in his life," replies the old lady.

"Well—well—and——" The young lady stole a quick glance over her shoulder to be sure they were not observed, and lowering her voice very much as they got nearer, she continued eagerly, "and tell me what he said. Did he tell you anything?"

"Well, he thinks he told me nothing, and intended to tell me nothing, but he did tell me a great deal," answered Miss Max, smiling shrewdly, "and I don't know whether you will be glad or sorry, but the upshot is, putting everything together, I am nearly certain that your mamma intends marrying, and that he is strongly against it."

"Really!" exclaimed Maud, stopping short, for they were walking very slowly, side by side.

"He did not say so in so many words, mind, but I can't account for what he said on any other supposition," said Miss Max. "Has not she been very diplomatic? I don't know that any living creature but I suspected what those mysterious excursions could be about. You see Mr. Coke jumped to the same conclusion when I told him the facts. I can't understand that kind of thing. What can be the pleasure of going through life, without a human being to whom you ever tell anything you either feel or intend? But she was always the same. She never trusted any one, as long as I remember her."

Maud listened to all this very thoughtfully.

"Tell me, like a darling, what you collect it from; tell me everything he said," after a considerable silence, Maud asked.

So Maximilla Medwyn repeated her conversation with Mr. Dawe with praiseworthy minuteness.

"What do you think of it?" she asked, in conclusion.

"I think it looks extremely like what you say," Maud replied, looking down thoughtfully.

"And do you like it?"

"I can't say I do. It is not a thing I have much thought about—mamma's marrying; but if she wishes——"

She stopped suddenly, and Maximilla saw, to her surprise, that she was crying.

"Pooh, pooh! my dear child, take care," said Miss Max. "Goodness knows who may see you. I had not an idea you cared so much. When I talked to you before about it you didn't seem to mind."

"I don't know; it didn't seem so likely or so near," she said, making an effort, and drying her eyes hastily. "And really I don't know, as you say, whether I ought to be glad or sorry."

"Well, for the present, we'll put that particular inquiry aside, for I want to tell you that horrid one-eyed man has pursued us, and I saw him at the old well, in the dark walk, just now. We must make out

whether he was at the house. I dare say Jones can find out all about him."

Full of this idea they returned together to the house; but no such person, so far as they could make out, had been there.

Jones, again charged to inquire, failed to discover anything.

"You see he has no business, or even pretence of business, at the house," said Miss Max. "I think he's watching you. It can be for no good purpose; and if I were you, I should tell your mamma."

"Why mamma? I mean, why should I tell any one?" She looked uncomfortably at Miss Medwyn.

"I think your mamma ought to know it, and I think it is better that people should know that you observe it."

Their eyes met for a moment, and were again averted.

"Yes, I think I will go to mamma, and tell her," said the young lady. "Shall I find you here when I come back?"

They were in the hall at the time.

"Yes, I'll wait here," she answered.

Lady Vernon was alone in the library. Maud knocked at the door, and her mother's voice told her to come in.

She did so, and found Lady Vernon writing. She raised her eyes only for a moment, and said, with a cold glance at her daughter:

"Have you anything to say, Maud?"

"Only this. I wished to tell you, mamma, that a very ill-looking, elderly man, who has been following my cousin Max and me from place to place, during the whole of our little excursion, evidently tracking and watching us, for what purpose we can't guess, has turned up, to-day, in the grounds. Maximilla saw him at the Nun's Well, in the dark walk, to-day. He is blind of one eye, and pretends to be travelling for a religious society, and his name is Elihu Lizard."

She paused.

Lady Vernon had resumed her writing, and said, with her eyes on the line her pen was tracing,

"Well?"

"I only wanted to ask, mamma, whether you knew anything of any such person?" said Maud.

"A man blind of one eye, what was he doing?" said Lady Vernon, dropping each word slowly, as she continued her writing.

"Following us from place to place, everywhere we went, and we really grew at last quite frightened and miserable," said the young lady.

"I think, Maud, you should endeavour to be less governed by your imagination. There is no one admitted to Roydon who is not a proper person, and, in all respects, of unexceptionable character. You must know that," said Lady Vernon, looking in her face with a cold stare, "and I don't think, within the precincts of Roydon, that you or Max have anything to fear from the machinations of blind elderly men, and I really have no time to discuss such things just now." And Lady Vernon, with imperious displeasure, turned and wrote her letter diligently.

So Maud turned and left the stately seclusion of that apartment, and returned through the other rooms to the hall, where she found Miss Max.

"I don't think she knows anything about him," said Maud.

"If she does not, that only makes it the more unpleasant," answered the old lady.

And they went out again together for a walk.

The interrogation of Lady Vernon had not resulted, I think, in anything very satisfactory. Maud, however, did not venture to renew it; and in their after rambles in the grounds or the village of Roydon, neither she nor Miss Max encountered any more the ill-favoured apparition of Elihu Lizard.

The monotonous life of Roydon went drowsily on.

At the entreaty of Maud, Miss Medwyn prolonged her stay, which she interrupted only by a visit of a day or half a day, now and then, to a neighbouring house; and so a week or more had flown, when an incident occurred which, in the end, altered, very seriously, the relations of many people in and about Roydon Hall.

CHAPTER XXIX. CAPTAIN VIVIAN.

One evening, Maximilla Medwyn and Maud returned from a drive, just in time to dress for dinner. The sun was setting as they descended from the open carriage and mounted the steps.

Compared with the flaming sky and ruddy sunlight outside, deep was the shadow of the hall as they entered. But Miss Max discerned in that shade the figure of a little man standing in the background.

She stopped for a moment, exclaiming:

"Good gracious! Is this you, Mr. Dawe?"

"How do you do, Miss Medwyn?" replied the small figure, advancing into the reflected glow that entered through the hall-door, and revealing the veritable black

wig and mahogany face of that saturnine humorist.

"I hope you are not going already?" said she. "We have not been out two hours, have we, Maud?"

Thus brought into prominence, Maud greeted the old gentleman, who then made answer to Miss Medwyn.

"I stay till to-morrow or next day."

"Well, that's an improvement on your last visit, short as it is," she replied. "Do you know, I had quite made up my mind that we were never to meet in this world again."

"So much for prescience. We are no witches, Maximilla," observed the little gentleman, dryly.

"Though we should not look the part badly, you and I," she rejoined, with a laugh; "one thing I do predict: you'll meet Mr. Tintern at dinner to-day; you were asking about him, you remember."

"H'm!" he responded, with a roll of his eyes.

And with this brief greeting the ladies went up to their rooms, and Mr. Dawe, more slowly, followed to his.

When Miss Maud returned to the drawing-room, Mr. Tintern, having been at the Wymering Sessions to meet his brother magistrates, had not yet arrived. Lady Vernon had not returned, but a stranger was there.

There was no one in the room, except a young man, rather tall and slight. He had brown hair and slight moustache, and was, if not actually handsome, certainly good-looking, and nothing could be more quiet and gentleman-like than his air and dress.

He had the pallor and general air of languor of an invalid. He appeared about thirty. He was leaning on the chimney-piece, and, I think, was actually looking at himself in the great mirror over it, as Maud came into the room.

It was a little awkward, perhaps, there being no one to introduce him; but, notwithstanding, in a little while they were very cheerfully engaged in conversation, though not exactly of importance or novelty enough to very deeply interest my readers.

They had not been so employed very long, when Lady Vernon appeared.

"Captain Vivian, I must introduce you to my daughter."

Captain Vivian bowed.

"You have never been in this part of the world before?" said Lady Vernon. "I think you said so?"

"No. Coventry, I think, is about the nearest point of any interest I'm acquainted with."

"There is a good deal worth seeing near us; but we can plan all that to-morrow. I only hope our fine weather may continue," said Lady Vernon. "Oh, Mr. Dawe! you came in so quietly, I did not see you. I dare say you knew your old room again. You used to like it long ago, so I have put you into it."

"Thanks. Yes—h'm!" said Mr. Dawe, solemnly, with a mysterious ogle, as if it was a good room to conjure in. "I remember it."

Captain Vivian was talking to Miss Vernon.

"How pale he looks!" Lady Vernon almost whispered to Mr. Dawe, her eyes covertly following the young man's movements. "He is fatigued—he is doing too much. Make him sit down."

Mr. Dawe nodded. He approached the young man and said a few words to him.

"Thank you very much, Mr. Dawe; but I really am not the least fatigued. I have not felt so strong I don't know when."

"Yes; but you *are* fatigued, and you must sit down," said Mr. Dawe, raising his brown hand and laying it on the young man's shoulder with an imperious pressure.

But before he had accomplished his purpose, Mr. Tintern, who had arrived, claimed his attention by playfully taking his disengaged hand, and saying:

"You won't look at me, Mr. Dawe. You are not going to cut your old friend, I hope?"

Mr. Dawe looked round. Tall Mr. Tintern stood before him, with a sort of wintry sunshine in his smile, which was not warm; his false teeth and light eyes were shining coldly on him.

Since they last met, Mr. Tintern's hair has grown almost white, but, as it was always light, this does not alter the character of his countenance, which, however, has grown puffy and wrinkled, with an infinity of fine lines, which indicate nothing bolder or higher, perhaps, than cunning.

Mr. Tintern is one of those pleasant fellows who is always glad to see everybody, and whose hand is always open to shake that of his neighbour; who can smile on people he does not like, as easily as he laughs at jokes he does not understand. For the rest, he parts with his condolences more easily than with his shillings, and taking on himself the entire burden of sympathy, he leaves to others the coarser

enjoyment of relieving suffering by sacrifices of money or trouble.

"I never cut my friends," says Mr. Dawe. "I don't think I have five in the world. That is a luxury for people who have money."

"You have some very good ones, out of the five, in this part of the world, at all events, and I only hope you remember them as well as they remember you," replies Mr. Tintern, with a playful effervescence.

Mr. Dawe makes one of his stiff bows; but they shake hands, and Mr. Tintern holds the hard brown fingers of his "friend" longer in his puffy white hand than Mr. Dawe seems to care for.

"Time flies, Mr. Dawe," says Mr. Tintern, with a little plaintive smile and a shake of the head.

"Yes, sir; and we alter very much," answers Mr. Dawe.

"Not all—not all," says Mr. Tintern, who does not acquiesce in the approaches of senility; "at least I can vouch for you."

And he lays his soft hand caressingly on Mr. Dawe's arm.

"H'm!" says Mr. Dawe.

And the interval that follows hears from him no return of the little flattery.

"We have been considering a good many things to-day after our session; putting our heads together. It will interest Lady Vernon," says Mr. Tintern, cheerfully. "By-the-bye, Lady Vernon, a question is to be submitted to you for your decision, and we so hope you will say 'Yes.' We are thinking, if you approve, of moving for a presentment next assizes, for a short road, only three and a half miles, connecting the two roads from the northern end of Wymering, across by Linton Grange, to meet the Trafford road, about a quarter of a mile at this side of Stanbridge. But it is nearly all Roydon property, I need not tell you, and of course all depends upon you, and we were consulting as to how best to submit it, so as to obtain your sanction and assistance."

"I think something ought to be done," says Lady Vernon. "I said so before, and I shall be very happy to talk with my steward about it, and the surveyor can call here; but I'm not so sure that those are the best points. I shall look at the map to-morrow. I traced the line; I'm nearly certain I did what I thought best. You shall hear from me in time for the assizes."

Miss Max had entered, and Mr. Dawe, in his grim, ungainly way, presented Captain Vivian. You might see that the old lady looked a little inquisitively at him, of course very cautiously, and that something was passing in her mind.

There was not much time, indeed, for speculation, and hardly any for a little talk with this young gentleman, for the whole party in a few minutes went away to the dining-room, where they were all presently much more agreeably employed.

Nothing very worthy of record occurred during dinner, nor after that meal, until the gentlemen had followed the ladies to the drawing-room, and then a little psychological discussion arose over the tea-table.

"I have been reading a novel, Barbara," said Miss Max, "and the heroine is made to fall in love with the hero before he has made a sign, and, for anything she knows, he is quite indifferent. Now it strikes me that I don't remember a case of that kind, and I am collecting opinions. Maud says it is impossible. Mr. Dawe, on the contrary, thinks it quite on the cards. Captain Vivian agrees with Maud that the thing could not be, and now I want to know what you and Mr. Tintern can add for the enlightenment of an old maid in her perplexity?"

Now this question interrupted a dialogue very earnest, and spoken very low, between Lady Vernon and Mr. Tintern, who were sitting quite far enough apart from the others to render their conversation inaudible to the rest of the party. That dialogue had been carried on thus:

"You may suppose what it has been to me," Lady Vernon said, "the suspense and torture of mind, although, possibly, of course, it may never be."

"You have my warmest and deepest sympathy, Lady Vernon; I need not tell you," answered Mr. Tintern, closing his eyes, with a look of proper concern, and a plaintive shake of his head, "and I feel very much honoured, I assure you, by your selecting me for this, I may say, very deplorable confidence; and I shall, I need hardly add, consider it a very sacred trust. But you have, of course, mentioned it to other friends?"

"Only to one, of whose good sense I have a very high opinion indeed," said she.

"Mr. Dawe?" suggested Mr. Tintern.

"Certainly not," said Lady Vernon, with a quick glance towards that solemn little figure. "He is about the last person on earth I should speak to on the subject."

"Oh, I see," murmured Mr. Tintern, deferentially, throwing at the same moment

a vast deal of caution into his countenance; "it is a kind of thing, of course, that requires immense circumspection."

"Yes," replied the lady, "and I intended——" It was at this word that Miss Max's inopportune inquiry broke in.

"I did not hear your question," says Lady Vernon, a little bored by the interruption.

Miss Max repeated it.

"Well, Mr. Tintern, what do you say?" she asked.

"Why, really," said Mr. Tintern, working hard to get up a neat reply, and smiling diligently, "where there is so much fascination of mind or of beauty, or of both, as we often see, in this part of the world, I can hardly fancy, eh?—the lady's being allowed time to be the first to fall in love—ha, ha, ha!—really—upon my honour—and that's my answer."

And he looked as if he thought it was not a bad one.

"And now, Barbara, what do you say?" persisted Miss Max.

"I? I've no opinion upon it," said Lady Vernon, with a little laugh; but a close observer could have discovered anger in her eye. "I will think it over, and, in a day or two, I shall be able to aid you with my valuable opinion."

And she turned again to Mr. Tintern, who asked, glancing at Captain Vivian:

"Mr. Dawe, does he make any stay in the country?"

"I don't know. I shall be very happy to make him stay here as long as I can. Captain Vivian, that young man, is his friend, and, it seems, was his ward, and as he could not leave him—he has been ill, and requires looking after—Mr. Dawe asked me if he might bring him here, and so I make him welcome also."

"A very gentleman-like, nice young fellow he is," said Mr. Tintern.

And so that little talk ended.

Mr. Tintern went his way, and the little party broke up, and the bedroom candles glided along the galleries, and the guests had soon distributed themselves in their quarters.

But that night an odd little incident did occur.

Miss Max had, after her usual little talk with Maud, bid her good-night, and her busy head was now laid on her pillow. The glimmer of a night-light cheered her solitude, and she had just addressed herself seriously to sleep, when an unexpected knock at her door announced a visitor.

She thought it was her maid, and said:

"Do come in, and take whatever you want, and let me be quiet."

But it was not her maid, but Lady Vernon, who came in, with her candle in her hand, and closed the door.

"Ho! Barbara? Well, what is it?" she said, wondering what she could want.

"Are you quite awake?" asked Lady Vernon.

"Perfectly; that is, I was going to settle; but it doesn't matter."

"Well, I shan't detain you long," said Lady Vernon, placing the candle on the table. "I could not sleep without asking you what you meant, for I'm sure you had a meaning, by asking me the question you did to-night."

She spoke a little hurriedly, and her eyes looked extremely angry, but her tones were cold.

"The only question I asked was about first love," began Miss Max.

"Yes; and I ask you what did you mean, for you did mean something, by putting so very odd a question to me?" she replied.

"Mean? What did I mean?" said Miss Max, sitting up straight in a moment, so that her face was at least as well lighted as her visitor's. "I assure you I meant nothing on earth, and I don't know what you mean by putting such a question to me."

The handsome eyes of Lady Vernon were fixed on her doubtfully.

"You used to be frank, Maximilla. Why do you hesitate to speak what is in your mind?" said Lady Vernon, sharply.

"Used to be—I'm always frank. As I told you before, there was nothing in my mind; but I think there's something in yours."

"I only wanted to know if you intended any insinuation, however ridiculous. I fancied there was a significance in your manner, and as I could not comprehend it, I asked you to define, as one doesn't care to have surmises affecting oneself afloat in the mind of a friend, without at least learning what they are."

"I had no surmises of the kind; but you have certainly gone the very way to fill my head with them. What could you have fancied I meant?"

"Suppose I thought that you meant that I had made overtures of marriage to my husband before he had declared himself. That would have been untrue and offensive."

"Such an idea never entered my head—never could have—because I knew all about it as well as you did. That's mere nonsense, my dear child."

"Well, then, there's nothing else you could mean, and so I'm glad I came. I believe it is always best to be a little outspoken, at the risk of a few hot words, than to keep anything in reserve among friends, and you and I are very old friends, Max. Good-night. I have not disturbed you much?"

And she kissed her.

"Not a bit, dear. Good-night, Barbara."

And Lady Vernon disappeared as swiftly as she came, leaving a new problem for Maximilla's active mind to work on.

CHAPTER XXX. A VISIT.

In the morning Lady Vernon was more than usually affectionate when she greeted Miss Max.

When the little party met in the small room that opens into the chapel, where, as we know, Mr. Penrhyn, the secretary, officiated at morning prayers, Lady Vernon actually drew her cousin Maximilla to her and kissed her.

"Making reparation I suppose," thought Maximilla. "But there was no occasion, I was not the least hurt."

And by the suggestion involved in this unusual demonstration, good Miss Max's fancy was started on a wild tour of entertaining conjecture respecting her reserved cousin Barbara, and the possible bearing of that curious question upon the sensibilities of the handsome woman of three-and-forty, who had not yet contracted a single wrinkle or grey hair; and I am sorry to say that the measured intonation of Mr. Penrhyn, the secretary, as he duly read his chapter from the First Book of Chronicles, sounded in her ears faint and far away, as the distant cawing of the rooks.

This morning service was now over, and the little party gathered round the breakfast-table.

Seen in daylight, Captain Vivian looked ill and weak enough. He was not up to the walking, riding, and rough out-door amusements of a country house. That was plain. He must lounge in easy-chairs, or lie his length on a sofa, and be content, for the present, to traverse the country with his handsome but haggard eyes only.

Those eyes are blue, his hair light brown and silken, his moustache soft and golden. It is a Saxon face, and good-looking.

There is no dragoonery or swaggering about this guest; he is simply a well-bred gentlemen, and, in plain clothes, as completely divested of the conventional, soldierly manner, as if he had never stood before a drill-sergeant.

Whether it is a consequence of his illness, I can't say, but he looks a little sad.

In a house now and then so deserted and always so quiet as Roydon, the sojourn of a guest so unexceptionable, and also so agreeable, would have been at any time very welcome.

A little time ago, indeed, Maud might have thought this interruption of their humdrum life pleasanter. She had a good deal now to think of.

"What an inheritance of pictures you have," said Captain Vivian. There is a seat outside the window, and on this the invalid was taking his ease, while Miss Max and Maud Vernon, seated listlessly within, talked with him through the open window. "I think portraits are the most glorious and interesting of all possessions; I mean, of course, family portraits."

"If one could only tell whose portraits they are," said Maud, with a little laugh. "I know about twenty, I think, and, Max, you know nearly forty, don't you? And I don't know who knows the rest. There is a list somewhere; grandpapa made it out, I believe. But they are not all even in that."

"I look round on them with a vague awe." He said: "Artists and sitters, so long dead and gone; I wonder whether their ghosts come back to look at their work again, or to see what they once were like. I envy you all those portraits. Aren't you proud of them, Miss Vernon?"

"I suppose I ought to be," replied Miss Vernon. "I dare say I should be if they were treated with a little more respect. But when one meets one's ancestors peeping from behind doors, shouldering one another for want of room in galleries and in lobbies, hid away in corners or with their backs to the wall half-way up the staircase, they lose something of their dignity, and it becomes a little hard to be proud of them."

"Such long lines of ancestors running so far back into perspective!" said the invalid, languidly. "Think of those who look back without a single lamp to light the past! I knew a man who was well born, his parents both unquestionably of good family, first his mother, then his father died, when he was but two years old," Captain Vivian continued, looking down, as he talked, on the veining of the oak

seat, along which he was idly running his pencil. "His fate was very odd. He found himself with money bequeathed to him by his father, and with a guardian who had hardly known that father, but who, I dare say half from charity, the father being on his death-bed, undertook the office. Of course if my friend's father had lived a little longer, the guardian would have learnt from his own lips all particulars respecting his charge. But his death came too swiftly. There was no mystery intended, of course; the money was in foreign stocks, and was collected and brought to England as the will directed, and neither he nor his guardian know as much as they would wish of the family of either parent. So there he is, quite isolated; a good-natured fellow, I believe. It gives him something to think about; and I assure you it is perfectly true. I was thinking what that poor fellow would give for such a flood of light upon his ancestry as your portraits throw upon yours."

"Perhaps he has made it all out by this time," suggested Miss Max.

"I don't think he has," said Captain Vivian.

"And what is his name?" inquired the old lady.

"Well, I'm afraid I ought not to mention his name," he said, looking up. "It does not trouble him much now, I think, and I dare say it has caused him more pain than it is worth. Here comes a carriage," he said, raising his head. "Your avenue is longer than it appears, it is so wide. What magnificent trees!"

"Who are they, I wonder; the bishop or the dean?" said curious Miss Max.

"It may be the Manwarings. We called there a few days ago," said Maud.

"The liveries look like brown and gold, as well as I can see," said Captain Vivian, who had stood up and was looking down the avenue.

"Oh, it is the Tinterns, then," said Maud.

"Chocolate and gold, yes," assented Miss Max. "I hope so much that charming creature, Miss Tintern, is in the carriage. You'd be charmed with her, Captain Vivian."

"I dare say I should. But I am an awfully dull person at present, and I rather shrink from being presented. Mr. Tintern, from what I saw of him last night, appears to be a good-natured, agreeable man?"

This was thrown out rather in the tone of an inquiry; but Captain Vivian did not wait for an answer; but, instead, slowly moved towards the hall-door, and before the Tinterns' carriage had reached the low balustrade of those ponds on which the swans and water-lilies float, he was in the drawing-room.

"I'm ashamed to say, I'm a little bit tired," said he to Miss Max; and pale and languid he did, indeed, look. "And I think till this little visit is over I'll get into the next room, and look over some of those books of prints. You must not think me very lazy; but if you knew what I was a week ago, you'd think me a Hercules now."

So, slowly, Captain Vivian withdrew to the quieter drawing-room beyond this room, and sat him down before a book in the window, and turned over the pages quietly.

In the mean time, agreeable Mr. Tintern has arrived, and his extremely pretty daughter has come with him.

She and Maud kiss, as young lady friends will, with more or less sincerity, after a long absence.

They make a very pretty contrast, the blonde and the dark beauty, Miss Tintern having golden hair and blue eyes, and Maud Vernon large dark grey eyes and brown hair.

So these young persons begin to talk together, while Lady Vernon and Mr. Tintern converse more gravely, a little way off, on themes that interest them more than flower-shows, fashions, and the coming ball at Wymering. Good Miss Max, who, in spite of her grave years, likes a little bit of frivolity, joins the young people, and has her laugh and gossip with them very cosily.

Having disposed of the Wymering ball, and talked over the statue of Mr. Howard in the church a little, and passed on to some county marriages likely to be, and said a word or two on guipure work, and the fashions, Miss Max said:

"I did not see your flowers at the Grange; I'm told they are perfectly lovely. The shower came on, you know; I was to have seen them."

"Oh, yes, it was so unlucky," says Miss Tintern. "Yes, I think they are very good. Don't you, Maud?"

"Yes, wonderful," answers Maud; "they throw us, I know quite into shade."

"I think you are great florists in this part of the world," says Miss Max. "I thought I was very well myself; but I find I'm a mere nobody among you. You have got, of course, that new Dutch hyacinth. It is so beautiful, and so immense—white,

I mean, and so waxen. What is its name, Maud?"

Maud gave the name of this beautiful monster.

"No; I'm sure we haven't got it," answers Ethel Tintern. "I should have liked so to see it."

"We have one," says Maud, "the last, I think, still in its best looks; they are very late. I saw it in the next room; come and see."

In the histories of a thousand men, I suppose it has not happened six times, possibly in that of ten thousand, not half so often, that a young man should be surprised, in a deep sleep, over a book, by two young ladies so beautiful, and in whose eyes he wished, perhaps, to appear agreeable.

When the young ladies had pushed open the door, they stood for a moment beside it talking, and then, coming in, Maud Vernon pointed out the flower they had come to examine.

And, as they looked, admired, and talked, accidentally her eye lighted on the invalid, as he sat in the window, one hand on his book, his book slanting from his knee, and he with closed eyes and head sunk on his other hand, in a deep sleep. She exchanged a glance with her companion, and a faint smile and a nod.

The young ladies returned to the drawing-room; and when they had left the room a very few seconds, the slumbering invalid, without disturbing his attitude, looked after them curiously from the corner of his now half-opened eye, and listened. Then he turned his chair, so as better to avert his face, and, without stirring, continued to listen.

But they did not return. And as Mr. Tintern proposed lunching at Hartstonge Hall, he and his pretty daughter very soon took their leave, and Captain Vivian watched them quietly from the window, as they got into the open carriage and drove away.

"What a nice girl Ethel Tintern is. I like her so very much," said Miss Max.

"Yes," said Lady Vernon, "but I did not think her looking well, did you?"

"Very pretty, but perhaps a little pale," acquiesced Miss Max.

"Very pale, indeed," says Lady Vernon; "when she was going I was quite struck with it. Did you ever see her before, Mr. Dawe?"

"No," answered that gentleman promptly from the recess of the window, where he was reading a note in his often consulted diary.

"I saw you look at her a good deal, Mr. Dawe," said Maximilla, "and I know you thought her very pretty."

"H'm!" said Mr. Dawe, oracularly.

"And I think she observed your admiration, also, for I saw her eyes follow you about the room whenever she fancied no one was looking, and I think there is more in it than you intend us to understand, and that you are a very profound person."

"It is time I should be," said Mr. Dawe, and the gong began to sound for luncheon as he spoke.

THE CITY OF HONEST IMPOSTURE.

Although the word "shoddy" has now taken a recognised place in the English language, and is received as applicable to, and expressive of, anything which is falsely pretentious, there are comparatively few persons who understand what it means, fewer still who know that shoddy is in itself an honest article of trade, openly manufactured, employing its hundreds of "hands," having its quoted price-list and its recognised head-quarters. These head-quarters are to be found at Batley—a town situate between Leeds and Dewsbury, at a junction where the railway branches off to Birstall. Having recently visited this place, and gone over two of the largest mills, we purpose, from the result of our own observation, and by the aid of an excellent local history, published some years since by Mr. Samuel Jubb, himself one of the largest manufacturers, to give some description of the shoddy trade.

The town of Batley is, like most other manufacturing towns in the district, straggling, bare, blank, uninviting. The few shops are mean and poor, and the eye grows weary of the interminable blank walls of the factories, and the tall chimneys vomiting forth the blackest of smoke, while the ear is assailed by the never-ceasing clatter of the steam-engines. Save at the times when the "hands" are trooping to business or to their homes, the streets are almost deserted. There do not seem to be many private or public conveyances, and the only vehicles in the roadway are the long waggons or trucks used for the conveyance of goods to and from the railway. Yet Batley claims to belong to antiquity, and has documentary evidence of its parish

church having been in existence for almost eight hundred years. It was not, however, until the eighteenth century that it attained even local renown, when it became known as a place engaged in the woollen manufacture, for which it was specially suited, both from its position being centrally situated in the immediate neighbourhood of the great markets of Leeds, Bradford, Huddersfield, Halifax, Wakefield, &c., and from its possession of a vast reservoir of water, which is necessary for dyeing, scouring, and other purposes, and which is obtainable by pumping from a level some fifty feet below the surface. At that time the principal employment of the inhabitants of Batley consisted in scribbling and carding wool by manual labour; but the name of the person who first produced rag-wool or shoddy, now the staple of its trade, and the date of its introduction, are neither of them properly authenticated. The first shoddy is, however, supposed to have been produced, in the year 1813, by Mr. Benjamin Law.

On our arrival at Batley, we learned from the station-master the names and addresses of two of the principal mill-owners, and after we had satisfied these gentlemen that we were not secret emissaries of trade rivals anxious to pry into the mysteries of their manufacture, but simply in search of reproducible information, we were received with great courtesy, and conducted through their respective establishments. And the first piece of information afforded us was that the outside world is wrong in its general acceptation of the word "shoddy," and of its entire ignorance of the word "mungo." It may be broadly stated that the preparation made from rags is called shoddy, while that pulled out of old cloth and woollen goods is called mungo. Before the breaking out of the recent war, the principal supply of rags and pieces for the preparation of shoddy and mungo came from Germany and Denmark, in which latter country manufactories for the production of rag-wool have existed for the last forty years. At one time America was a great source of supply to the Batley market; but a prohibitory import tariff has caused the demand almost entirely to cease. Batley is now principally supplied with rags, &c., from the rag-merchants in London and other large English towns, who are themselves the customers of the rag and bottle shops and the marine stores, frequented by the poorest of the population. There is also an immense importation of Australian rags, which are looked upon with great favour, and, by some, preferred to any other. The principal rags sent down by the London dealers are "mixed softs," stockings, white flannels, carpets, and a large quantity of army cuttings, namely, serge, flannel, cloth, clippings of various colours, which being new, sound, of good colour and quality, are highly esteemed. From Scotland come old stockings and old rags, from Germany knitted stockings in grey and white, while Austria, Italy, Turkey, and Russia swell the large list. It is scarcely necessary to remark that Ireland is a very rare and small contributor, as her natives generally keep their rags, and wear them at home. Home and foreign rags all arriving in large bundles, are easily distinguishable by those accustomed to dealing with them from the manner in which they are packed. The prices of these rags vary greatly, ranging from five shillings to one hundred and eighty shillings per hundredweight.

The first process that the rags undergo is that of classification and sorting. This is a far more extensive process than would at first be imagined, as they are classified into a variety of colours and qualities, and yield a great number of distinct sorts, "mixed softs" being, it is said, assorted by some dealers into upwards of twenty different kinds. This sorting, in the mill which we first visited, was carried on in a room nearly sixty yards long; those engaged in the process being principally girls and boys. After sorting, the rags are packed in sacks, which are suspended by ropes to the rafters to the ceiling, while their contents are compressed by the simple process of the boys getting into the sacks and treading the rags down with their feet. The rags are then taken direct to a machine, which in bygone days was known as a "devil," but is now called a "swift," a revolving cylinder containing from ten to fourteen thousand teeth, according as it is coarse or fine, the coarser set swifts being used for the manufacture of what are called "soft" rags—stockings, flannels, carpets, &c.—into shoddy; the finer set for tearing cloth into mungo. These swifts, which perform from six to seven hundred revolutions per minute, are fed by boys, whose business it is to heap with rags the travelling web, which brings layer by layer continually up to the teeth, by which they are at once torn to pieces and ground up. All this is speedily vomited forth in thick fluffy flock, soft, textile, and free from

knots. In the rooms in which these revolving cylinders are at work, the air is laden with light fibrous floating particles, which would bring tears into Professor Tyndall's eyes, and which no doubt tend to the propagation of asthma, which is to a certain extent a common disease among the operatives, who otherwise enjoy average health. The refuse of these rags, after lying to rot, is used for the purpose of manuring the hop-producing districts in Kent and Surrey. Some of it is also re-manufactured into coarser flock for the stuffing of mattresses, couches, &c., while from another portion of the refuse is obtained a chemical substance called prussiate of potash, which has been found to be a valuable agent for dyeing purposes.

The flocks are then gathered together and taken to the mixing house, where, after having been sprinkled with oil, the long fibre and the short fibre are mixed together with a small quantity of wool, according to the quality required. Here a large quantity of shoddy, mixed with a small quantity of wool, forms the stuff which army contractors sell as blankets for the soldiers, and here we were shown a thin sleezy kind of lightish brown stuff, which was under order for exportation to the French and German armies, the Batley manufacturers maintaining a strict impartiality in the execution of the orders given by the contending nations. The oil used in this process is generally olive, rape, and Price's patent.

The wool, as it may now be termed, is next taken to the scribbling machine, whence, passing through a series of rollers, it issues in long thick bands, which are then taken to the carding machine, then to the spindles, in which what we originally saw as short, thick, frizzy flock, is spun into long strong yarn. The yarn is then woven into cloth in power-looms, which are mostly attended to by women.

The next process is called milling, or pulling the goods, an important item in the manufacture, and one for the success of which much skill and care are requisite, its object being to pull the cloth to the required substance, and also to cleanse it. Under this process the cloth is damped, and thumped with huge mallets, and is then taken away to undergo what is known as "raising," which is really the bringing forth of the pile, and which is performed either by machinery known as a raising "gig," or by hand.

In the raising gig the natural production known in the country as "teazles," which look like overgrown acorns covered with sharp, strong bristles, are largely used. These teazles principally come from the East Riding of Yorkshire and from France, the hand-raising being performed with small instruments full of fine steel wire teeth. The pile is raised sometimes on one, sometimes on both sides of the cloth; then the goods are all taken to the dye-house, where we saw them, some steeped in enormous vats, some hanging on rollers, while the liquor ran through them. After it has been duly dried, the cloth goes through the next and final process of finishing or dressing; its surface is clipped, and brushed, and hot-pressed by machinery, after which it is ready for the consumer.

It is not too much to say, that no cloth is made without some infusion of shoddy; they will tell you at Batley it would not "work" so well, look so well, or be so much thought of. A great deal of the celebrated West of England cloth is manufactured within ten miles of Bradford, in Yorkshire; and an Ulster coat which we were wearing at the time of our visit, and which we fondly believed to be made of Irish frieze, was inspected and handled by one of our entertainers, who, with a grin, declared it to contain a certain proportion of mungo. Apropos of this word, Mr. Jubb gives us a comic derivation. He declares that one of the dealers of the newly discovered material was endeavouring to push the sale of a small quantity, when a doubt being expressed by the bystanders as to the likelihood of his getting rid of it, the purchaser shouted with emphasis, "It mun go, it mun go," and these words are the origin of the name which it has retained ever since. From the same authority we learn that mungo fluctuates in value more than shoddy; its present price being about fourfold what it was at one period. In the early days of its history the price of London mungo ranged over nine or ten pounds per ton, while about ten years ago, the time of Mr. Jubb's writing, it was thirty-eight pounds per ton; the highest price it had ever reached having been forty-three pounds per ton. The first shoddy sales by public auction commenced about twenty years ago, and were then held at the Dewsbury and Batley railway station, but are now conducted in auction-rooms at Dewsbury. There are usually two sales a week, and the quantity falling under the hammer at each is, on an average, about forty thousand pounds, varying in price from one penny to two shillings and sixpence per pound. The war has been of immense service to the Batley manufacturers, and

they used up all the stock they had on hand, and have been even glad to take back and re-work goods which they had previously returned as condemned.

Wages are good throughout the district. Women and boys engaged in sorting, packing, &c., get ten shillings a week, while in the manufacturing departments the earnings vary from one pound to forty-five shillings. The hands are well spoken of by their employers, and are said to be of the most part thrifty, industrious, and intelligent. There is a local newspaper, and a mechanics' institute. Concerts and entertainments are neither rare nor ill-attended. The manual adulteration in which they are constantly employed does not appear to have affected their moral nature, and a life-long residence in the city of honest imposture seems to have had no ill effects on its inhabitants.

STREET SHOWS.

It was a characteristic trait in the nature of Mr. Jonas Chuzzlewit, when he wished to compliment the young lady he admired, that he should have taken her to see shows, like Westminster Abbey, St. Paul's, the public galleries, and such kindred places as the liberality of the nation had thrown open to the public free of all charge. I think a man of genial disposition, but yet of provident habits, might better this suggestive example, and by exerting some watchfulness and diligence, inexpensively treat his sweetheart to something more entertaining than the great monuments of his country. In fact, by beating up and down the public streets, watching his opportunity, he might show her a whole series of entertainments, almost theatrical in character, and do the whole almost as cheaply as Mr. Chuzzlewit did. Being a diligent patroller of the streets, and not confining my partiality, after the Johnsonian precedent, to Fleet-street—a bad theatrical ground—I have come to the conclusion that there are in the community a vast number of such economical pleasure-seekers, well-dressed and well-kept, who enjoy these open-air exhibitions: but who, when the plate, as at a charity sermon, comes round, skulk away, or let it pass. The latter are far more to be respected; those, I mean, who give a sturdy or surly refusal, as if some principle stood in the way; but there is something almost mean in those genteel publicans who stand afar off, looking carelessly, making believe to be waiting for a friend or a cab, snatching a surreptitious joy, one eye on the show, the other questing nervously the showman's deputy and his plate or bag. This latter officer, I note, seems to be trained specially to entrap such skulkers, for he has an art of coming suddenly round the elbow, as if he had come up through a trap; and I note that the cheap spectators are often so startled by the apparition, that from shame and surprise mixed, the lowest currency token is wrested from them.

I own to respecting the men who are engaged in this profession. Your ordinary performers have their own temple, sacred, as it were—their minds are undisturbed; but these players of the pavement have to look warily, as they play, to a hundred other matters—to the police, the waggon, the brougham, the thief, the mud; they have to pitch their voices against the din and roar of an open thoroughfare, and yet as a general rule their performance is always respectable. If there was anything like a common interest among them, which there is not—and there is no reason why in this point they should differ from other respectable professions—they might combine and produce a grand monster entertainment, which would be of a most piquant and singular character. Supposing that the present writer were commissioned to go forth and make the necessary engagements in a day's march, he thinks he could muster all the shows of any mark or respectability. He has a kindly interest in them, and would know where to find them.

I think I would commence my monster performance with those two gentlemen clothed in very decent black, who wheel about the spring hand-cart with the cage, on which the furry and decorated white cat sits comfortably, in spite of crossings and rough macadamisation, and with the air of luxury of a chancellor on his wool-sack. I would know where to look for them—say, at the corner of New Burlington-street. Capital I should say was sunk in the show, for the properties are very elegant and almost costly. I own the canaries excite pity, but they go through their task with a seeming alacrity, which checks compassion. Decent black, putting his hand into the cage, takes out one, slips a cap and coat on him, fastening them by mysterious wires, and sets him on the box of a little carriage, claps another behind as footman, slips the heads of two others into simple wire halters, and away the equipage travels. Sometimes the feathered steeds start without their burden, and decent black gets very angry. Then the little white mouse is brought out, ascends a lofty flag-staff,

and descends more rapidly than he ascended, and then is placed in the mouth of my lord chancellor. I suspect the agony of that moment—to both parties concerned—is something exquisite. The terror of the little creature is too painfully revealed, though there is not much power of expression in a white mouse; but the sort of rueful grin on the chancellor, as he is forced to self-denial of his inclinations, of the summary "decree" which he is longing to make, by foreclosure of his fine tusks, but which he dare not, is really grotesque. We breathe again as the victim scampers away—but at the moment a gruff voice says, "Now this won't do, you know," and the curtain has to come down abruptly. "Force majeure," as the French say, is at hand, stiff, Noah's-arkish. Decent black packs up slowly, and we all disperse sadly.

Next I would look for two gentlemen in fleshings, who have really a handsome chest of awful knives, which can be swallowed or thrown in the air half a dozen at a time, with shining plates, glittering bottles, &c., all laid out in the middle of the road. It seems like a small plate-chest. One is the performer, a rather worn creature, the other a very elderly clown, whose jests make one feel sad, or somehow think of the grave, during the rest of the day. He addresses his friend as "Sir," and speaks of him with an enormous reverence and respect. The trials of these two would excite any one's sympathy. They are very bold in their proceedings, and the daring character of their tricks require a large area. Often, just as everything is ready, the course cleared, the performer girding himself with much ostentation of bracing up his muscles, a great wain comes slowly across the scene of the dazzling exploit, the driver aloft and contemptuous, his wheel barely grazing the plate-chest. There is a suspense, and all is clear again, when a whole train is seen approaching — light market-cart, private brougham, coal waggon, &c. — and the drivers, not insensible to such joys, purposely go as slow as they can. One singular exhibition I witnessed here, which is worth recording. The veteran clown announced that his friend had communicated to him that he would throw up a monster potato, "the hoigth of that 'ere house," and allow it to descend upon his skull, a feat to be performed entirely in compliment to the high-class character of the present audience.

"No, sir?" said the veteran clown, lost in reverie and admiration. "This potato? On your head? Why, sir, it would kill any man!"

A grunt intimates that his friend is quite serious.

The veteran clown looks sadly round. "He *will* do it, then, gentlemen. Do you mean, sir, that you will?" and so on.

What followed was more worthy of admiration than the feat itself. The veteran clown, resigning himself to the stern purpose of his devoted friend, then only thought how to make it as easy as possible to his feelings. Conscientiously he could not allow the sacrifice until a united contribution of at least a shilling fell into the arena. This rather cooled public ardour; it seemed so vast a sum. The arts by which it was raised would have helped him on in the diplomatic profession. He entreated, he spoke with scorn, he made as though he would pack up his effects and go—this when threepence had been subscribed. His friend seemed to oppose him, as *he* would be content to do it from his fine feelings and wish to oblige us.

"No, sir, you shall not. I am ashamed to have to ask such a thing—only sevenpence more!"

This was a fiction, much more was required. Tinkle — chink — twopence more. It only wanted threepence now. We had waited so long, lost so much valuable time—hang the fellow! let us have done—so here goes! After all, to see such a feat was worth a few halfpence. Tell split an apple on his child's head, but this patriot would split one on his own, and without an arrow. When the sum was made up, I blush to say, there were signs of a want of faith in the veteran clown; he seemed to say that it was unreasonable to expect human life to be put in peril for that ridiculous sum. A few pennies more, surely. Loud and angry murmurs were heard, and the denunciations of the crowd became so hostile that he felt he could not push the matter further; so he gave way, and added with a pleasant effrontery, as if he had waived part of the bargain, "that he was sure the gentlemen would make it up to them after they had seen the feat." On this the friend brought himself together; and after many flourishings, sent his potato aloft to a vast height, then, folding his arms, prepared to receive it. Down it came, and, with a most disagreeable crunching sound, descended on his bare forehead, where it was split into a dozen fragments. It was really an unpleasant exhibition, and makes us understand the case of the negro recorded by Mr. Hingston, who, for a small sum, would allow any one to hit his head with a stout cudgel.

It would be easy to find, for our show, our Italian friend with the highly-trained monkey on the high little table, to whom he tosses a gun, with which the creature presents arms, and which, to his own mortal terror, he fires off. A broom is presently flung to this highly-educated animal, with which he sweeps an imaginary crossing with a frantic diligence highly amusing; so, too, with the violin which he fiddles on vigorously, and the cymbals which he beats. There is a monotony, however, in his motions, for the result would seem about the same if he swept with his fiddle-bow, or played with his broom. His master seems a grim personage, and we may suspect the private lessons to be of a very stern character.

The odious, blackened Ethiopians, half-tipsified, with their detestable music, whose congenial haunt is at a tavern door, I would not admit to our show on any terms.

Late disastrous events in France have increased our street attractions vastly, and contributed some rather elaborate entertainments to the thoroughfares. Only this morning the rolling of a drum beaten vigorously by a lady in our genteel thoroughfare, has called every servant-maid to the windows. The drum-beater's husband, or guide and friend, has a large cart with a train of rueful-looking goats, a greyhound, and a poodle, all attached, while a huge white step-ladder, a large globe, with other apparatus, are significant of "highly-trained performing" business. The French proprietor makes stirring speeches over his goats, clears a great space pompously, as if about to review an army, and sets his animals to work. The goats look rueful enough in their gaudy scarlet coats, and stand on bottles with great reluctance, whereas the greyhound, showing the superior intelligence of his race, exhibits alacrity. The most comic portion is the grand final "act," when the whole company ascend one side of the step-ladder and descend the other in a procession of the melancholy description, advancing with a sort of agonised precaution, now halting, now advancing, the proprietor stimulating laggards with voice and whip, the greyhound evidently wishing to clamber over the backs of his nervous friends, who stop the way in front. This exhibition was so attractive that a perfect amphitheatre was gradually formed of carriages and carts, while I am convinced that the receipts must have amounted to a very handsome figure.

These suggestions are offered in a deferential spirit, and I think some recognition of this open-air branch of the profession might be gracefully made by theatrical managers.

REGRETS.

If we had but known, if we had but known,
Those summer days together,
That one would stand next year alone,
In the blazing July weather!
Why, we trifled away the golden hours,
With gladness, and beauty, and calm,
Watching the glory of blossoming flowers,
Breathing the warm air's balm;
Seeing the children like sunbeams play,
In the glades of the long cool wood;
Hearing the wild bird's carol gay,
And the song of the murmuring flood.
Rich gems to Time's pitiless river thrown,
If we had but known, if we had but known!

If we had but known, if we had but known,
Those winter nights together.
How one would sit by the hearth alone,
In the next December weather;
Why, we sped those last hours, each for each,
With music, and games, and talk,
The careless, bright, delicious speech,
With no doubt or fear to baulk.
Touching on all things, grave and gay,
With the freedom of two in one,
Yet leaving, as happy people may,
So much unsaid, undone.
Ah, priceless hours for ever flown,
If we had but known, if we had but known!

If we had but known, if we had but known,
While yet we stood together,
How a thoughtless look, a slighting tone,
Would sting and jar for ever!
Cold lies the turf for the burning kiss,
The cross stands deaf to cries,
Dull, as the wall of silence is,
Are the grey unanswering skies!
We can never unsay a thing we said,
While the weary life drags past,
We never can stanch the wound that bled,
Where a chance stroke struck it last.
Oh, the patient love 'neath the heavy stone,
If we had but known, if we had but known!

If we had but known, if we had but known!
We had climbed the hill together;
The path before us seemed all our own,
And the glorious autumn weather.
We had sown: the harvest was there to reap.
We had worked: lo! the wages ready.
Who was to guess that the last long sleep
Was closing round one already.
With never a warning, sharp and strong,
Came the bitter-wrench of doom,
And love, and sorrow, and yearning, long
May wail by the lonely tomb.
Oh, keenest of pangs mid the mourner's moan,
If we had but known, if we had but known!

THE DESCENT OF MAN.

There is one little word, of only two syllables, the adverb "therefore," which has exerted an enormous influence on the human mind. By its aid, almost any crude account can be cooked into plausibility; things, perfectly incredible in themselves, can be made pleasant to the sceptical reader. It prepares the mind for, and

softens, the most startling conclusions. You have only to cite undeniable facts, determine the inference you would draw from them, put "therefore" between the two, and the thing is done. Tenterden steeple was unhappily built, therefore we ought not to be surprised at the existence of the Goodwin Sands.

It has always struck the present writer that the acceptability to be accorded to the Darwinian doctrines entirely depends on the value to be allowed to the Darwinian "therefore"—and in no case more than in the Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex. Many men, many minds; some men will be convinced by arguments which other men hold to be insufficient. There are reasonings which every body admits at once to be conclusive, irresistible; there are other reasonings which, though they may set people thinking, and give rise to grave doubts, fail to carry all before them and to fill the hearer with complete conviction.

There are also ideas which, though felt as a shock when first propounded, by familiarity become simply ludicrous, and may even in the course of time be admitted with a languid half-assent. But truth ought not to be so indolently dallied with. To know the truth, it is worth while to summon our energies to ask, whether the "therefore" proposed to us be really so potent as its apostles maintain. In such matters, each person must judge for himself; and he can often be led to make up his mind by a simple statement, unsupported by any argument whatever. Some such statement shall be attempted here.

The object of Mr. Darwin's latest work is to consider, firstly, whether man, like every other species, is descended from some pre-existing form; secondly, the manner of his development; and thirdly, the value of the differences between the so-called races of men. The high antiquity of man has recently been demonstrated by the labours of a host of eminent men, beginning with M. Boucher de Perthes;* and this is the indispensable basis for understanding his origin. Professor Huxley, in the opinion of most competent judges, has conclusively shown that, in every single visible character, man differs less from the higher apes than those do from the lower members of the same order of Primates. The conclusion that man is the co-descendant with other species of some ancient, lower, and extinct form, is not in any degree new. Lamœrck long ago came to this conclusion, which has lately been maintained by several eminent naturalists and philosophers. Dr. Barrago Francesco published, in 1869, a work bearing in Italian the title of "Man, made in the image of God, was also made in the image of the ape."

It is assumed that he who wishes to decide whether man is the modified descendant of some pre-existing form, would probably first inquire whether man varies, however slightly, in bodily structure and in mental faculties; and if so, whether the variations are transmitted to his offspring, in accordance with the laws which prevail with the lower animals? It might also naturally be inquired whether man, like so many other animals, has given rise to varieties and sub-races, differing but slightly from each other, or to races differing so much that they must be classed as doubtful species? The inquirer would next come to the important point, whether man tends to increase at so rapid a rate, as to lead to occasional severe struggles for existence; and consequently to beneficial variations, whether in body or mind, being preserved, and injurious ones eliminated. Do the races or species of men, whichever term may be applied, encroach on and replace each other, so that some finally become extinct? But those considerations, which must most of them be answered in the affirmative, are set aside for a time, in order to show, first, how far the bodily structure of man shows traces, more or less plain, of his descent from some lower form.

It is notorious that man is constructed on the same general type or model with other mammals. All the bones in his skeleton can be compared with corresponding bones in a monkey, bat, or seal. So it is with his muscles, nerves, blood-vessels, and internal viscera. Man, moreover, is liable to receive from the lower animals, and to communicate to them, certain diseases, as hydrophobia, variola, and glanders; and this fact proves the close similarity of their tissues and blood, both in minute structure and composition, far more plainly than does their comparison under the best microscope, or by the aid of the best chemical analysis. Monkeys are liable to many of the non-contagious diseases to which we are subject—to catarrh, with its usual symptoms, often degenerating into consumption; to apoplexy, inflammation of the bowels, and cataract in the eye. Medicines produce the same effect on them as on us. Many kinds of monkeys have a

* See The Age of Stone, ALL THE YEAR ROUND, First Series, vol. xx., p. 394.

strong taste for tea, coffee, and spirituous liquors; they will also smoke tobacco with pleasure. Strong drink makes them tipsy, with a next day's headache following the excess. An American monkey, after getting drunk on brandy, would never touch it again, and thus was wiser than many men.

Now what do these facts prove? Our "relationship" to them, as Mr. Darwin expresses it, thereby implying our common descent from some primeval monkey ancestor; or simply that brutes have limbs and organs analogous to ours, and are made of flesh and blood? But it is not easy to conceive how they should be otherwise constituted, or of what else they should be made, living as they do on the same earth and in the same media as ourselves, and sustaining their life by breathing, eating, and drinking. Mr. Darwin claims for brutes a brotherhood with man, by the same plea with which Shylock argues for the common nature of Jews and Christians.

"Hath not a brute eyes? Hath not a brute hands (or their analogous substitutes), organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases; healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh (or something like it)? If you poison us, do we not die? And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge?"

Animals, to complete the parallel, notoriously indulge in revenge; the elephant especially is known to do so. Many anecdotes, probably true, have been published on the long-delayed and artful revenge of various animals. The accurate Rengger and Brehm state that the American and African monkeys which they kept tame, certainly revenged themselves.

The progress of our embryonic development is adduced as evidence of the orgin of man. The human embryo, at a very early period, can hardly be distinguished from that of other members of the vertebrate kingdom. At a somewhat later period, when the extremities are developed, the feet of lizards and mammals, the wings and feet of birds, no less than the hands and feet of man, all arise from the same fundamental form. It is quite in the later stages of development that the young human being presents marked differences from the young ape. Without question, the early stages of the development of man are identical with those of the animals immediately below him in the scale: without a doubt, in these respects, man is far nearer to the apes than the apes are to the dog. And now for the grand inference. Every individual human being, before actual birth, passes through forms analogous to those of the lower animals; therefore, the whole human race has passed through those inferior forms, until it finally became man. But is the sequitur strictly logical? Is it so inevitable as to admit of no demur?

Of the same value, but no more, are the considerations derived from the presence of rudimentary organs. Not one of the higher animals can be named which does not bear some part in a rudimentary condition; and man forms no exception to the rule. Rudimentary organs are either absolutely useless, or they are of such slight service to their present possessors, that it is denied they could be developed under the conditions which now exist. Rudiments of various muscles have been observed in many parts of the human body; and not a few muscles which are regularly present in some of the lower animals, can occasionally be detected in man in a greatly reduced condition. Every one must have noticed the power which many animals, especially horses, possess of moving or twitching their skin. This is effected by the panniculus carnosus. Remnants of this muscle in an efficient state are found in various parts of our own bodies; for instance, on the forehead, by which the eyebrows are raised.

Some few persons have the power of contracting the superficial muscles on their scalps; and those muscles are in a variable and partially rudimentary condition. M. A. de Candolle knows a family, in which one member, the present head of the family, could, when a youth, pitch several heavy books from his head by the movement of the scalp alone; and he won wagers by performing this feat. His father, uncle, grandfather, and all his three children, possess the same power to the same unusual degree. A distant cousin resides in another part of France, and on being asked whether he possessed the same faculty, immediately exhibited his power. This case offers a good illustration how persistently an absolutely useless faculty may be transmitted.

The muscles which serve to move the external ear, which also belong to the system of the panniculus, are in a rudimentary condition in man; they are also variable in development, or at least in function. Mr. Darwin has seen one man

who could draw his ears forward, and another who could draw them backward; one celebrated medical lecturer (was it not Abernethy?) used to amuse his pupils by exhibiting to them the movements of his ears. It is supposed to be probable that most of us, by often touching our ears, and thus directing our attention toward them, could, by repeated trials, recover some power of movement. But no man possesses the least power of erecting his ears—the one movement which might be of use to him. The ears of the chimpanzee and orang are curiously like those of man, and the keepers in the Zoological Gardens assert that those animals never move or erect them. Why these animals, as well as the progenitors of man, should have lost the power of erecting their ears, we cannot say. It may be that, owing to their arboreal habits and great strength, they were but little exposed to danger, and so during a lengthened period moved their ears but little, and thus gradually lost the power of moving them. This would be a parallel case with that of those large and heavy birds, which from inhabiting oceanic islands have not been exposed to the attacks of beasts of prey, and have consequently lost the power of using their wings for flight. Some monkeys, too, exhibit a peculiar structure—a vestige of formerly pointed ears—which occasionally reappears in man.

It appears as if the posterior molar or wisdom-teeth were tending to become rudimentary in the more civilised races of men. These are rather smaller than the other molars, as is likewise the case with the corresponding teeth in the chimpanzee and orang; and they have only two separate fangs. They do not cut through the gums till about the seventeenth year, and they are much more liable to decay, and are earlier lost, than the other teeth. In the Melanian races, on the other hand, the wisdom-teeth are usually furnished with three separate fangs, and are generally sound. Professor Schaaffhausen accounts for this difference between the races by "the posterior dental portion of the jaw being always shortened" in those that are civilised. This shortening Mr. Darwin attributes to civilised men habitually feeding on soft, cooked food, and thus using their jaws less. It is becoming quite a common practice in the United States to remove some of the molar teeth of children (English parents often do the same with their young folks' incisors) as the jaw does not grow large enough for the perfect development of the normal number.

It is an interesting fact that ancient races of men more frequently present structures which resemble those of the lower animals, than do the modern races. One chief cause seems to be, that ancient races stand somewhat nearer than modern races, in the long line of descent to their romote animal-like progenitors.

In order to understand the existence of rudimentary organs, we have only to suppose that a former progenitor possessed the parts in question in a perfect state, and that, under changed habits of life, they became greatly reduced, either from simple disuse or through the natural selection of those individuals which were least encumbered with a superfluous part.

Thus we can understand how it has come to pass that man and all other vertebrate animals have been constructed on the same general model; why they pass through the same early stages of development; and why they retain certain rudiments in common. Consequently, we ought frankly to admit their community of descent. It is only our natural prejudice, and that arrogance which made our forefathers declare that they were descended from demi-gods, which leads us to demur to this conclusion. But the time, Mr. Darwin predicts, will before long come, when it will be thought wonderful that naturalists, who were well acquainted with the comparative structure and development of man and other mammals, should have believed that each was the work of a separate act of creation.

Mr. Darwin's Comparison of the Mental Powers of Man and the Lower Animals, is more amusing, but not a bit more conclusive, to the present writer, in establishing the development of man from some lower form. It is full of matter to overflowing; but a good many weak arguments, put cumulatively together, do not make one strong argument. Circumstantial evidence as to facts and deeds may carry all before it by its fulness. Circumstantial reasoning is little worth; to be convincing, it must be complete. Logic admits of no half-measures; it either proves all, or nothing at all. Not every reader of the Descent of Man will admit that it has proved all it tries to prove.

That comparison is made solely to show that there is no fundamental difference between man and the higher mammals in their mental faculties. The variability of the faculties in the individuals of the same species, is noted as an important point in his favour. And indeed it is the unanimous opinion of all who have long attended to

animals of many kinds, including birds, that the individuals differ greatly in every mental characteristic.

The lower animals, like man, manifestly feel pleasure and pain, happiness and misery. Happiness is never better exhibited than by young animals, such as puppies, kittens, and lambs, when playing together, like our own children. Even insects play together, as has been described by P. Huber, who saw ants chasing and pretending to bite each other, like so many puppies.

It is a well-established fact that the lower animals are excited by the same emotions as ourselves. Terror acts in the same manner on them as on us, causing the muscles to tremble, the heart to palpitate, and the hair to stand on end. Suspicion, the offspring of fear, is eminently characteristic of most wild animals. Courage and timidity are extremely variable qualities in the individuals of the same species, as is plainly seen in dogs.

We see maternal affection exhibited in the most trifling details; thus Rengger observed an American monkey carefully driving away the flies which plagued her infant; and Duvancel saw a hylobates washing the faces of her young ones in a stream. So intense is the grief of female monkeys for the loss of their young, that it invariably caused the death of certain kinds kept under confinement by Brehm in North Africa. Orphan monkeys were always adopted and carefully guarded by the other monkeys, both male and female. One female baboon had so capacious a heart, that she not only adopted young monkeys of other species, but stole young dogs and cats, which she continually carried about. An adopted kitten scratched this affectionate baboon, who certainly had a sharp intellect; for she was much astonished at being scratched, and immediately examined the kitten's feet, and without more ado bit off the claws. As Whewell has remarked, "Who that reads the touching instances of maternal affection, related so often of the women of all nations, and of the females of all animals, can doubt that the principle of action is the same in the two cases?"

Allowing that the principle of action is the same, does it thence inevitably follow that the ancestry is the same, in the two cases?

Most of the more complex emotions are common to the higher animals and ourselves. Every one has seen how jealous a dog is of his master's affection, if lavished on any other creature; the same fact is observed with monkeys. This shows that animals not only love, but have the desire to be loved. Animals manifestly feel emulation. They love approbation or praise; and a dog carrying a basket for his master exhibits in a high degree self-complacency or pride. A great dog scorns the snarling of a little dog, and this may be called magnanimity. Several observers have stated that monkeys certainly dislike being laughed at; and they sometimes invent imaginary offences. In the Zoological Gardens there was a baboon who always got into a furious rage when his keeper took out a letter or book and read it aloud to him.

Hardly any faculty is more important for the intellectual progress of man than the power of attention. Animals clearly manifest this power, as when a cat watches by a hole and prepares to spring on its prey. Wild animals sometimes become so absorbed when thus engaged, that they may be easily approached. Mr. Bartlett has furnished a curious proof how variable this faculty is in monkeys. A man who trains monkeys to act, used to purchase common kinds from the Zoological Society at the price of five pounds for each; but he offered to give double the price, if he might keep three or four of them for a few days, in order to select from. When asked how he could possibly so soon learn whether a particular monkey would turn out a good actor, he answered that it all depended on their power of attention. If when he was talking and explaining anything to a monkey, its attention was easily distracted, as by a fly on the wall or other trifling object, the case was hopeless. If he tried by punishment to make an inattentive monkey act, it turned sulky. On the other hand, a monkey which carefully attended to him could always be trained.

It is almost superfluous to state that animals have excellent memories for persons and places. A baboon at the Cape of Good Hope recognised Sir Andrew Smith with joy after an absence of nine months. Even ants, as P. Huber has clearly shown, recognised their fellow-ants belonging to the same community after a separation of four months.

Imagination is one of the highest faculties of man. By this faculty he unites, independently of the will, former images and ideas, and thus creates brilliant and novel results. Dreaming gives us the best notion of this power. As Jean Paul Richter says, "The dream is an involuntary art of poetry." As dogs, cats, horses and probably all the

higher animals, even birds (some birds sing in their sleep) have vivid dreams, (and this is shown by their movements and voice), we must admit that they possess some power of imagination.

Reason, it will be admitted, stands at the summit of the faculties of the human mind. Few persons any longer dispute that animals possess some power of reasoning. It is a significant fact that, the more the habits of any particular animal are studied by a naturalist, the more he attributes to reason, and the less to unlearnt instincts. Dr. Hayes in his work on the Open Polar Sea, repeatedly remarks that his dogs, instead of continuing to draw the sledges in a compact body, diverged and separated when they came to thin ice, so that their weight might be more evenly distributed. This was often the first warning and notice which the travellers received that the ice was becoming thin and dangerous.

Mr. Colquhoun winged two wild-ducks, which fell on the opposite side of the stream; his retriever tried to bring over both at once, but could not succeed. She then, though never before known to ruffle a feather, deliberately killed one, brought over the other, and returned for the dead bird.

It has been often said that no animal uses any tool; but the chimpanzee in a state of nature cracks a native fruit, somewhat like a walnut, with a stone. Rengger easily taught an American monkey thus to break open hard palm-nuts, as well as boxes. Another monkey was taught to open the lid of a large box with a stick, and afterwards it used the stick as a lever to move heavy bodies. In the Zoological Gardens, a monkey which had weak teeth, used to break open nuts with a stone; and after using the stone, hid it in the straw, and would not let any other monkey touch it. Here, then, we have the idea of property; but this idea is common to every dog with a bone, and to most or all birds with their nests.

The Duke of Argyll considers that the fashioning of an implement for a special purpose forms an immeasurable gulf between man and the brutes. But Sir J. Lubbock suggests that when primeval man first used flint-stones for any purpose, he would have accidentally splintered them, and would then have used the sharp fragments. From this step, it would be a small one to intentionally break the flints, and not a very wide step to fashion them. In breaking the flints, sparks would have been emitted, and in grinding them, heat would have been evolved: thus the two usual methods of obtaining fire may have originated. The anthromorphous or man-shaped apes, build for themselves temporary platforms on which to take rest and sleep; the orang is known to cover itself at night with the leaves of the pandanus. In these habits Mr. Darwin sees the first steps toward some of the simpler arts; namely, rude architecture and dress, as they arose amongst the early progenitors of man.

Animals possess an approach to language. A Paraguayan monkey, when excited, utters at least six distinct sounds, which excite in other monkeys similar emotions. The sense of beauty has been declared to be peculiar to man. But the bower-birds, by tastefully ornamenting their playing passages with gaily coloured objects, as do certain humming-birds their nests, give evidence that they possess a sense of beauty. Well and good, granting all this, and more, what is the inference? Does similarity of mind and affections necessarily imply community of origin? For that is the grand question at issue. Granting that the difference in mind between man and the higher animals, great as it is, is certainly one of degree and not of kind, is it an inevitable consequence that the possessor of the higher intellect, man, should be an improved descendant of the possessor of the lower intellect, a man-shaped ape? Let the inquirer carefully read the book—it is not hard reading—which is the crowning life-work of an amiable, honest, and most painstaking savant. After reading it, let him ask himself, "Does this clever book impress with the conviction that it gives the true and veritable history of the Origin and Descent of Man?"

IN DANGER IN THE DESERT.

In the spring of 18—, I was intrusted by government with some despatches of the greatest importance, to be carried from Damascus to the English political agent at Bagdad. The journey from Syria to Chaldea was, I knew from experience, a perilous one, whether performed on camel or horse, and with whatever escort; and, even if uninterrupted, would take me six full days. I was an old hand, and had not lived for months among Arab tribes without knowing that Russian spies, French agents, and Turkish robbers (in which compre-

hensive word I include all Turkish officials of whatever rank) would certainly brew me some trouble by the way, if they caught even the faintest inkling of the object of my journey. So I prepared accordingly.

The more poor, wretched, and forlorn a Desert traveller looks, the more likely he is to reach the end of his journey in safety. The Bedouin sees showy dresses, fine horses, and well-filled purses, as far off as the vulture can see a dead gazelle. Thoroughly impressed with this fact, the day before my departure I ferreted out the most dingy rag-shop in the narrowest and dirtiest street of the most filthy quarter of all Damascus. Seated there, cross-legged, beside the one-eyed, hunch-backed proprietor, I wrangled with him for two good hours over a ragged robe, patched with as many colours as Benjamin's garment. For this thing of shreds and patches I paid the enormous sum of twenty piastres, or about half a crown English, and took care to get a formal receipt, flourished in goodly Arabic, the blessing of the pilgrim who kept the stall being thrown into the bargain. In addition I bought an enormous dirty red turban as big as a prize pumpkin, beneath which my long black hair fell down twelve inches long. I took care also to provide myself secretly with two little Derringer revolvers, and I further laid in two pounds of fine snuff, several cases of powder, some quinine, and a large bottle of castor-oil for the use of some Arab workmen employed in the town near Bagdad, to which I was ultimately destined. I next hired three strong camels, and two camel-drivers, trusty Arabs, outlaws from some Desert tribe. My last step was one that may seem a singular one to my readers; but it was well intended, and it proved my salvation. After dusk I went to a Turkish officer whom I had known for years, and, to his infinite astonishment, borrowed a pair of handcuffs. All these arrangements completed, I presented myself before Her Majesty's representative, and from him I received every possible assistance in carrying out the minor arrangements for my dangerous undertaking.

At six A.M., while the city was still only half awake, I, with my two camel-drivers, started for the house of an English lady in the suburbs, who had kindly undertaken to store all my heavier luggage till I returned. This extraordinary woman, the modern Lady Hester Stanhope of Arabia, has been married no fewer than seven times. Her first husband was a well-known English nobleman; the present is an Arab sheik, the chief of a powerful Bedouin tribe between Bagdad and Damascus. Shaking hands with Lady ——, I remounted my camel, and pushed on straight for Tadmor, once Palmyra, the magnificent city of palaces, but now a ruined heap of broken pillars, the abode only of the jackal and the snake. We had scarcely ridden a mile through the palm-groves and corn-fields before a clatter of quick hoofs made me look round, and a sight fitted for a land of romance, mystery, and enchantment met my eyes. The lady I had just left, escorted by a gentleman, who proved to be a Knight of Malta, came galloping after me to guard me half way to Tadmor. It was one of the sudden, generous, and chivalrous caprices of this strange person, whose heart misfortunes and faults had still left warm, kindly, and full of womanly tenderness. Her body-guard was as strange a one as if she had been an enchantress of the times of Al Raschid. It consisted of half a dozen thorough-bred Bedouin colts of the royal race; they were without saddles or bridles, and were playing and skimming round her, like butterflies round a flower. Beautiful creatures, light-footed as deer, playful as monkeys, they chased each other round their mistress, and the moment she called them by name, stood stock-still in a wondering but obedient circle, or came thrusting their noses into her hand for the customary cakes. To some of those pets she had given Arab names, but others were christened, playfully or sarcastically, after English celebrities. Two of the finest of her equine attendants were Palmerston and Pitt, the most ill-tempered and kicking was Ellenborough.

We arrived at night at a village, outside which my servants pitched our tents, which were easily built up with a sheet or two, and a few palm-sticks; and there, like gipsies or Irishmen at a fair, we had our meal and our coffee. Before long the beauty of the lady's escort began to attract attention.

The village being on the outskirts of the Desert, the men were nearly all excellent judges of horse-flesh, and they at once set us down as horse-stealers, on our way to sell our spoil to the Bedouins. In vain we assured them that the colts were not to be sold. Still they kept asking the price of this and that one, and patting and pinching them with a true horse-dealer's unction, believing my strenuous denials to be nothing but the coquetry generally practised by all

dealers on would-be purchasers. At last I quieted my somewhat troublesome friends by getting them in crowds round me, and telling them the latest news from Europe, and assuring them, to their infinite delight, that the Turkish government would not last long.

I need scarcely say that for the lamb we eat, the dates we needed, the milk, honey, and the corn for the camels and horses, we paid as liberally and as scrupulously as if we had been in Europe. This seems a foolish fact to mention, but in that Syrian village such a proceeding was by no means a matter of course. So little, indeed, a matter of course, that the whole village was roused by the news of such justice and generosity. A great surprise awaited us, which impressed this astonishment sufficiently upon us. After supper, in the cool of the evening, I was sitting at my door, when I heard in the distance drums and dervish flutes approaching; presently, behind a crowd of excited Arabs, waving sticks and swords, came a litter borne by six people, and on the litter, like a prisoner on a stretcher, lay a very old white-bearded man, the sheik of the village. He was fourscore and ten he told me, and he had never before known any traveller who came there to pay for anything he took. He had, therefore, ordered his servants to carry him before he died, to see the wonderful man who paid his way, so that he (the sheik) might give him his blessing, and then return home and depart in peace.

The old man spoke well and wisely. He had reflected much, though all his life confined to so narrow a sphere. He said to me, with much pathos: "I have seen nothing in this world but wickedness. The Turks seize all we have in the name of Allah and the sultan. I am very old, fourscore and ten, nearly blind, and dying fast, yet I would make them bring me here to see the man who paid for what he and his horses and camels wanted, for I never saw a man before who really feared Allah and showed justice to his fellow-man." He was certain I could not be a Turk, he knew I was not an Arab — of what nation was I?

I replied, smiling, that I found it difficult to tell him, for I was born in Ireland, educated in Rome, and brought up in England.

He replied, that England must be a glorious country, where, though a woman governed, every one could obtain justice. "Here we," said he with a sigh, "poor wretches, on the frontier of the Desert, in a land of barbarism, although living between two of the most ancient cities of the East, are slaves from our birth to our grave. We are governed in the name of the sultan, and we are robbed in his name. The Turks reduce us to beggary and our children to shame. There is no redress. Old and respected as I am," added the old sheik, "if I were to dare to petition at Damascus or Bagdad against any acts of injustice, in three days the village would be razed to the ground, and I should, perhaps, be beaten to death, in spite of all the men I could arm. Yes," said the old man, his eyes lighting up with almost youthful fire, "it will be a happy day for Syria when the Russian legions cross the frontier, and summon us all to rise, for the Turks are only fit to be slaves, and the day of their fall must come."

The next morning at daybreak I fired a pistol as a signal for starting. Lady —— was asleep, surrounded by her horses, her tent-door guarded by the gallant Maltese chevalier, who carried a drawn sword in his hand. My first proceeding was to wash my face with water in which a lemon had been squeezed, the best of all precautions, next to the dry Desert air, against ophthalmia. After breakfast I supplied myself and my two camel-drivers with sufficient bread, water, grain, cheese, and dates for six days. We were soon ready to leave the village for all the dangers of the lonely, melancholy waste, that has known no change since the Creation. But already my enemies were on my track. Two Turks, French and Russian spies, accompanied by a renegade Arab, had made their appearance in the village, and changing their horses for camels, pushed on for the Desert, to give notice, as I afterwards found to my cost, of my approach. I suspected them, but I merely exchanged the ordinary Oriental salutations as they passed and said nothing. Off they strode, and disappeared in the burning sunshine.

At eight o'clock I parted from Lady ——, and proceeded on my way, my faithful compass my only guide. We soon left behind us the village, our camels starting at the rate of about three miles an hour, which they quickened, as they acquired confidence and a knowledge of the ground, to about four miles an hour. At the third hour we turned off the right track, about five miles to the right, in order, if possible, to overtake the spies, or at least to elude the

vigilance of others who might be behind us. About five o'clock all habitations of man, all green or golden patches of sesame, millet, or oats began to disappear, and half an hour before sundown we reached the outskirts of the actual Desert, by no means a mere plain of sand, but a grey ocean, with moss and thorny shrubs that seemed to float upon its surface.

That I may not appear to exaggerate in the smallest degree the dangers into which I really fell, I must here explain to my readers that the trusty servants whom Lady —— had recommended to me were not outlaws in a bad sense. The Bedouins expel men from their tribes for the violation of their most trifling laws. They would expel an Arab, for instance, for contracting himself to a daughter of the tribe without her father's consent, or a a youth who, discontented with a promised dowry, contracted himself to another maiden. His life being in danger for these not very tremendous sins, a man so compromised generally takes refuge in flight. It is this reason why there are so many Arabs now living in stone houses on the shores of the Persian Gulf, who have abandoned the customs of the race of Ishmael.

Of this class of more or less harmless Bedouin outlaws, Damascus contains some thousands. But the worst robbers and murderers in the Desert are the outlaws of the outlaws, rascals expelled from the stationary Arabs, who then turn wild and ride forth into the Desert to live by bloodshed and murder. The real Bedouin, born and bred in the Desert, is seldom cruel except to the Turk, and then only in retaliation for old cruelties, or to satisfy old grudges.

After pushing three miles in the straight course to Tadmor, I turned about a mile from my course and settled for the night, making holes about three feet deep, according to the Desert custom, for the fires, so that our pursuers, if there were any, should not see the flame by night. We set up our tents with spears, as the night air in the Desert, even in summer, is cold, especially when the wind is blowing from the Persian Gulf. The night dews also are very heavy. We then "hobbled" our camels, took some food, and went to sleep. After four hours' rest we started again, and continued without interruption till noon the next day; we then again alighted, prepared our fires to enjoy our usual coffee, having first fed our camels, and given them a bottle of English beer each, from a small stock I had brought with me from Beyrout. After two hours' rest we proceeded about three miles, till we reached a broad tract of damp sand, stretching for a space of about twenty miles long and twenty broad. Certain that I should find running water, I got off my camel and dug my spear down a depth of about nine feet, but no water would come, though the moisture clearly enough proved that it was to be found at no great distance.

At first, to my surprise I saw no animals here, where I should have expected gazelles to be numerous, but after a few minutes a large hawk flashed between my camel and that of one of my Arabs. At the same moment I heard a hare screaming like a child. The female hawk was up in the air, about fifty yards over head, watching the prey, ready to swoop down if it cowered, or to turn it back to its pursuing mate. The poor frightened hare, seeing death near, scuttled into a hole in the sand for protection; but, poor thing, she was out of the frying-pan into the fire, for she reappeared in a moment, and fell dead close by me. She had been bitten by a snake. In an instant I was off my camel digging up the hole with my spear, and soon secured the snake in a bag, thinking it might be of some use to me hereafter. I firmly believe my poor Arabs thought me mad for troubling myself at all about either hare or snake. Very soon after this things began to look black, for we came on fresh camel tracks, both in front of us and to the right of us. The spies had been too quick for me. The tracks were fresh, although the wind was blowing, a sure proof that they were not far before us, probably on their way to the wells at a Slebi station, so I pushed on, as once at the wells, no one dare molest us.

These Slebis are a mysterious people, and no one has yet discovered from whom they are descended. In fact, they are neither Bedouins, Turks, nor Jews. There are none of the lost tribes among them. They are neither Mahomedans nor devil worshippers, but worship the one God. They neither rob nor plunder, but dwell in stationary tents, possess vast flocks of white and black sheep, and seldom fight, except, occasionally, among themselves. These good people are most hospitable, and devote their lives to maintaining the wells for the use of travellers. The only wants of these simple-hearted people are grass and water. They have no chiefs. They are the missionaries of the Desert, a brother-

hood self-organised to relieve distressed travellers, especially Europeans.

We spent the night with these worthy people, whom even robbers will not molest, and after filling our bags with water and grain for the camels, at three o'clock in the morning we steered straight for Bagdad. We rode on unmolested, and neither saw nor heard anything of the spies or of our pursuers. We were not, however, to escape, and we had not gone far before we came upon fresh tracks in the sand. Our enemies were just ahead. Another moment, and they would be upon us. There was great need of caution. I at once ordered my men to strike off a mile to the right. We then halted, threw down our camels, gagged them with blankets, tied their legs, and raised a circular heap of sand round them to hide them from any watchful enemy. We took some food, and gave our camels corn, and a half ration of water: having slept a couple of hours, we now turned back to the wells, where we had been the night before, and from there steered straight for Koubisseh, the frontier town.

We had not been half an hour on the new road before we heard a savage cry, more like the howl of a flock of pursuing wolves than the shout of men, and horsemen appeared bearing down on all sides of us. It was the war-cry of Bedouin robbers, who had been hired to intercept us. There were twelve of them, as savage and diabolical cut-throats as ever hemp was grown for. My men seized their double-barrel guns and were eager for resistance. Three or four of the rascals shot, the rest might fly, and besides, our first bullets expended, we had still our spears. But this was not in the plan of my campaign. I was on a mission, as I well knew, of peace, and I was resolved not to shed blood except at the last extremity. Now was the time for the handcuffs. I had my strategy ready to overcome the difficulty. Quickly I told my men to lock the handcuffs on me, and represent to the robbers that I was a mad soldier whom they were ordered to take home to his friends at Bombay viâ Bagdad. My men were faithful and prompt. They did as I told them. In a moment the thieves dashed up, brandishing their spears. They instantly noticed me, naturally enough, for I was dancing an insane hornpipe, and asked eagerly why I was manacled. My men said, "Don't be afraid, it is a madman we are taking to Bassorah, and he would kill himself if he was not in handcuffs." They then gathered round me, as if I were a new sort of animal, and asked me if I spoke Arabic. My men, with pardonable mendacity, replied they did not know, on which I began jabbering nonsense in Arabic, and begged the robbers, as good fellows, to take my irons off and keep me from those camel-drivers, who had deprived me of liberty for no reason at all. The robbers at once took me for a madman. "Ragh el Allah!" (God's own holy man), they call an insane person, and they fear and reverence such unfortunate men as specially inspired by Heaven, though not always with intelligible prophecies. The chief, a murderer from his boyhood I was sure, called for the key of the handcuffs. "Quick!" he said; "you rascals take off the irons from the Lord's own man." Then threatening my men, who pretended to be reluctant, the thieves all dismounted, and sat down to examine my saddle-bags to see what they could find there worth carrying off. The robber sheik, a hideous rascal, more like an ogre than a man, with a flat nose, huge mouth, and staring, bloodshot eyes, was the first to rummage. The first thing he pulled out was a frieze coat of mine. They had no tents, and it was often cold camping in the Desert. The sheik at once fell in love with this old friend of mine. He had no patience to study how it should be worn, and at once drove his legs through the sleeves, in which they wedged fast. The tails he flung over his shoulder with a puzzled look at his admiring and envious followers. I could not help roaring with laughter, his gestures of discomfort were so irresistible. Knowing that no one would touch the madman, I got behind the entangled sheik, and pushed him over; then, with a yell, I ran at one or two others, thin slight fellows, I could almost have thrown over my head, and pushed them down. The rest only laughed at my gambols, and at the discomfiture of their angry comrades. The sheik tried harder than ever to adopt himself to his new costume, and floundered about like a man in a sack race.

"What do you call this robe?" he cried out, angrily, to me. "I can't get my legs in it or out of it. I never could ride about the Desert here, Hadji, in this; it is only fit for a priest, and you see I can't walk in it either. Here, Achmet, bring your knife and cut me out."

Achmet, a great hairy giant of a Kurd, produced a most bloodthirsty huge knife, ripped open the sleeves of my poor frieze coat, and liberated the bewildered sheik.

"You don't mean to tell me," he said, "people in England ride about in such things as that?"

I assured him they did, and then rolled on the ground, laughing at his mistake.

"What it is to be a fool!" said the spearmen to each other, pitying me. "Thank God we are not the favoured of Heaven! Allah be praised! Let's see, sheik, what else is in the bags."

I then implored them to give me the handcuffs, for fear the men who were with me should get hold of them again, and I promised them my blessing, which was worth two camels, adding, in Irish, just to relieve my feelings, "Success to all honest men, and the nearest gallows for all rogues." When I had got hold of my handcuffs, and had hidden them safely away, the thieves made me sit down with them in a circle, and explain to them the contents of my own saddle-bags.

"Mille diaoul," thought I, "if you trust to me, you shall learn all about them, bad cess to ye."

The first thing they pulled out was my big bottle of castor-oil, which the sheik held admiringly up till the fat liquid gurgled inside.

"What's this, Hadji?" he said, with eyes gloating upon the oily liqueur.

I kept my face, and replied humbly, "Beled Franghi" (white honey from Europe).

The wretches' cruel eyes glistened. Every lean brown hand was at once stretched towards the transparent bottle. They held a council as to which was to have the first draught. By a sublime effort of self-denial, the sheik at last divined that it was only respectful that I should begin. Yes, I had the rascals now. I declined, saying I had been drinking rather too much of it lately, but I drew the cork for the chief, and passed him the bottle. He was bent on a good gulp, and his mouth opened in anticipation like a young shark's. After a deep draught, he passed the bottle on to the one next him in the circle round the fire. It was getting dark, and the thieves were too eager for their turns to look at their companions or to utter a word. There was no remark till the last man had drained the bottle; then the sheik began to curse and spit, and the others then spit and cursed worse than he did.

"Do you call that honey from Europe?" said one.

"It is not even sweet," said a second.

"It is accursed, most accursed," groaned the deeply-compromised sheik. He would not forget that honey for six months.

"What bees those must be!" moaned Achmet; "if I had them I'd thrash them to death. Come, let's try the other things," and he began to experimentally munch one of my candles, which he hardly appreciated, though at first he shouted:

"By Allah, here is mutton fat!"

But the others eat away with more approval. Then the chief shouted for coffee, and honoured my sanctity by giving me the first basinful. They now prepared for sleep, but my revenge was not yet complete.

I had still something in store for them, as they lay rolled up in front of the camels. I remembered I had powder stowed away, which the robbers had not yet found. I went to my servants and told them to get sticks, and run and beat the nearest bushes, declaring they had seen a snake six feet long. They at once raised a shout. The robbers instantly leaped up and took their spears to help in the search. I took advantage of the moment. I dug a hole and buried under the sand six tins, with several pounds of powder in each. In a few minutes the men came back, declaring they could not find the snake, and began to relight their fire. They then laid themselves down in the Bedouin way in their goat-skins, with their feet to the flame and their faces to Mecca. I called my servants away, and removing to a respectful distance from the fire, watched patiently for the effect of my small gunpowder plot. My servants knew nothing of what I had done. For twenty minutes the fire burned cheerfully in the centre of the ring of sleepers. Then came an explosion such as the Bedouins had never before heard or seen; it came like a volcano and earthquake combined, with a roar and rush of fire, a storm of embers tearing up the sand for six feet round where it burst, driving the sleepers here and there, as if a shell had broken to pieces in the midst. The robbers flew in all directions, shouting and screaming, or falling on their faces before the supposed fire from heaven, praying Allah to avert the deserved punishment that had fallen on their heads for plundering a poor holy madman. I ran after them laughing, asking what was the matter, as I had heard nothing. "Not heard it!" said the men, who were plastered all over with clay; "why there was a noise ten thousand times louder than the loudest thunder, and the flame sprang out at us like fiery snakes ten

feet long." They then knelt all round me, struck their foreheads to the ground, and prayed my forgiveness, promising in the name of the Holy Prophet, never again to molest God's most holy man. To end all this I had to give the infernal rogues my blessing a second time all round.

They now agreed to take me to the nearest Slebi well on the road between Medina and Bagdad. On our way we crossed the bed of a brook. Now every tribe in the Desert has its own cipher, secret mark, or emblem, and its own flag. Lagging behind at this point I got off my camel. I wrote my name in full in Arabic, with words indicating that I was in the hands of robbers, and had gone on a certain route. I had once lived among the El Defir, a powerful tribe in this neighbourhood, and I knew well that if any of their horsemen or scouts passed that ford within the twenty-four hours, they would instantly set their spearmen on my track.

When my worthy captors arrived at the Slebi station, they never said a word to those good people about having robbed me. They merely said that I was a poor forsaken madman whom they had found wandering in the Desert, and they suggested that any food and protection afforded me would as certainly bring a speedy blessing on the heads of the hospitable Slebis as it had done on their own. The Slebis, who show toleration to all, and do not merely talk of it, and who are Christians in actions, though not in words, at once prepared a meal for the ill-favoured rascals, whom they no doubt more than half guessed to be lying robbers and murderers. They made a huge bowl of porridge for us, and I was placed at the head of the circle on a bag of meal, the seat of honour. The tent in which we were seated was one of a row of black camel's-hair tents which opened one into the other, and would hold at least two hundred persons. Before our meal was half over, a Slebi rushed into the tent screaming:

"We are lost, the El Defir are coming down on us like locusts. Their army is close at hand; they are going to attack us." It was my tribe; they had seen what I had written. I looked at the robbers, their gibbet faces were perfectly livid. They felt already the camel's-hair rope pressing their weasands. The chief dropped his spoon. Between Achmet's blubber lips the porridge smoked unswallowed. Five minutes after, nearly a thousand mounted spearmen had surrounded our tent, and were calling out for the robbers, and for Hadji el Hur, whom the thieves had made prisoner. Another moment the black curtain of the tent-door was lifted, and the chieftainess strode in. It was the daughter of the sheik, who, in the absence of her father was governing the tribe, and gloried in this opportunity of doing me a service. I shall never forget the bewilderment and horror painted on the faces of the robbers as they stared from her to me. I recovered my senses with extraordinary rapidity.

"Behold!" she cried to the swarthy men who surrounded her, "behold a member of your own tribe. This is Hadji el Hur, who is a prince of Europe"—prince, indeed!—"and Allah has sent me here to save him. Hang those robbers at once. Bind them hand and foot. We have long wanted these men, for they are of the race of Satan."

The frightened wretches threw themselves grovelling down and kissed my feet. "Save our lives, Hadji," they cried, "we did you no harm."

"No," I said, "Leila, there shall be no blood shed. I am here on a mission of mercy and peace. Forgive these wretches. Remember that your tribe also plunder and prey. In future let these accursed rogues be merciful to poor travellers, as I have been to them. Perhaps before they die they may repent of their misdeeds, and show charity to those more miserable than themselves. Take away their camels, get them two asses to carry water, and let them tramp over the Desert on foot till they can find some refuge, and pray for the day to come when no Desert tribe shall rob or hinder the inoffensive traveller."

Off on their somewhat hopeless pilgrimage trudged the robbers, and in half an hour my tribe had pitched their tents. Lambs were killed — we ate, sang, and danced, "so, merrily, three days of Thalaba went by." At the end of that holiday we mounted our camels, the friendly tribe escorting me two hundred miles towards Bagdad—which city I eventually reached in perfect health and safety.

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THE ROSE AND THE KEY.

CHAPTER XXXI. A LETTER.

THE invalid came slowly in now, and the little party, roared for by the gong, as I said, went away together to luncheon very merrily.

When this sociable meal was ended, Maximilla said to Maud, as they were going through the door, side by side:

"Some letters have come here from the Hermitage, and one among them that concerns you. Come up to my room with me, and we can read it."

"Who is it from?" asks Maud, with excusable impatience.

"You shall see when we get up-stairs—come."

"But what is it about?"

"You."

And the agile old lady ran up the stairs before her, laughing.

"Come in and shut the door," says Miss Max, as Maud reached the threshold; "bolt the door; it is no harm. Come here, to this window, and nobody can hear."

She recollected the dressing-room door, and turning the key in it, rejoined Maud, whose curiosity was a good deal piqued by these precautions.

"Well, who is it from?" said Miss Max, with a provoking smile, as she raised it by the corner.

"If you don't tell me this moment, I'll push you into your chair, and take it by force."

"Well, what do you say to Mr. Marston? I don't know a more exemplary lover; the letter is from him. You shall hear," answered Miss Max, as she opened it, and adjusted her glasses, smiling all the time a little mysteriously.

Maud looked grave, and a brilliant colour dyed her cheeks.

"Listen," said Maximilla, very unnecessarily, and began.

"DEAR MISS MEDWYN,—You have been so extremely kind to me that I venture to write a very short note, which I can no longer forbear, although I scarcely know myself what it is going to be. Miss Maud Guendoline, as I still call her, although she told me that I still have to learn her surname, imposed a command upon me, when taking my leave on that happy and melancholy Sunday evening, which I can never forget, a command which I need hardly assure you I have implicitly obeyed. I am, therefore, as entirely in the dark as ever respecting all I most ardently long to hear. Every day that passes makes me long more intensely for the hour when I may again see that one human face which has enthralled me, which alone of all others has ever interested me——"

"Mine, of course," suggested Miss Max, raising her eyes for a moment. "Well:"

"—Has ever interested me. Are you aware that the ball at Wymering is to come off nearly a fortnight earlier this year than usual? I have been so miserable lest the change of time should in any way endanger the certainty of Miss Maud Guendoline's attendance at it. Your nature is so entirely kind, that I know you will pardon my entreating you to write two or three words, only to reassure me, and tell me my misgivings are groundless. Till I shall have heard from you that your beautiful friend is to be at Wymering on the evening of the ball, I cannot know an hour's quiet."

"Poor thing! I can't bear to keep him in suspense another hour," said Miss Max.

Maud said nothing—neither "Yes" nor "No," not even "Read on." Miss Max, however, went on diligently, thus:

"I am going, if you allow me, to make a confidence, and implore a great kindness. If you think you can do what I ask, and will kindly undertake it, I cannot describe to you how grateful I shall be. I am tortured with the idea that your young friend has undertaken too much. From some things she said, I fear that her life is but a dull and troubled one, beset with anxieties and embittered by conditions, for which she is utterly unfitted. You are our friend—hers and mine—and do, I implore, permit me to place at your disposal what will suffice to prevent this. You must not think me very coarse. I am only very miserable as often as I think of her troubles and vexations, and entreat you to intervene to prevent them, acting as if entirely from yourself, and on no account for another. If I were only assured that you would undertake this, I could wait with a lighter heart for the moment when I hope to meet her again. You can understand what I suffer, and how entirely I rely upon your kind secrecy, in the little commission I so earnestly implore of you to undertake."

"And see how religiously I keep his secret!" said Miss Max. "But, poor fellow! doesn't it do him honour? He thinks, at this moment, that you are living by the work of your fingers, and he not only lays his title and his title-deeds, with himself, at your feet, but he is miserable till he rescues you from the vexations of your supposed lot in life. I know very well that you think him an arrant fool. But I think him a hero—I know he's a hero."

"Did I say I thought him a fool?" said Maud. "I don't know who is a fool and who is a sage in this world; and if he is a fool, I dare say I'm a greater one. I believe, Max, we are wise and foolish where we least suspect it. I think we are most foolish when we act entirely from our heads, and wisest when we act entirely from our feelings, provided they are good. I said so to Dr. Malkin, and he agreed; but, indeed, it is a dreadful life. I don't know where there is happiness. I was thinking if I were really the poor girl he believes me, how wild with happiness all this would probably have made me."

"It ought, as you are, to make you just as happy," said Maximilla.

"It ought, perhaps, but it doesn't. If I were that poor girl, gratitude and his rank would make me like him."

"And you don't like him?"

"No, I don't like him."

"Well. How inexpressibly pig-headed! How ungrateful!" exclaimed Miss Max, almost with a gasp. "There is everything! Such kindness, and devotion, and self-sacrifice. I never heard of such a lover—and no possible objection!"

"I don't like him. I mean I don't love him."

"And I suppose you won't go to the ball?" said Miss Max, aghast.

"I will go to the ball."

"Do you know, Maud, I'm almost sorry I ever saw that poor young man. I'm sorry I ever beheld his face. One thing I am certain of, we must not go on mystifying him. I'll write to him instantly, and tell him everything. I'll not let him suppose I take a pleasure in fooling him; I like him too well for that. I don't think, in this selfish world, I ever met any one like him. I shall wash my hands of the whole business; and I'm very sorry I ever took any part in practising this unlucky trick upon him. I must seem so heartless!"

"If you write any such letter I'll not go."

"Not go to the ball!" cried Maximilla. "Well, certainly, that will seem good-natured—that is the climax!"

"I say to the ball I'll not go if you write him any such letter," said Maud.

"And you will go if I don't?" persisted good-natured Miss Max.

"Certainly," said Maud, decisively.

"I don't see why he should be mystified," said Maximilla, after a considerable pause.

"He shall be mystified as long as I like. It is the only way by which we can ever know anything of him. What could you have known of him now, if it had not been that he was all in the dark about us? No; you shall write to him to-day, if to-day it must be, and tell him, in whatever way you like to put it, that you can't think of accepting his offer of money, as I and my mother have, one way or other, quite enough."

And at this point these two wise ladies, looking in one another's eyes, laughed a little, and then very heartily, and Miss Max said: "It is a great shame. I don't know how we can ever look him in the face again when he discovers how we have been deceiving him!"

"You have much too mean an opinion of your impudence, Max. At all events, if we can't we can't, and so the acquaintance ends."

"Well? What more? What about your going to the ball?" says Maximilla.

"Say that we shall certainly be there—you and I. You know you must stay for it."

"I suppose I must."

"And, let me see, it will be on Thursday week?"

"Yes; I'll tell him all that."

"But wait a moment. I haven't done yet. The ball begins at ten exactly. Yes, ten, and you and I shall be in the gallery at nine precisely."

"In the gallery!"

"Yes, in the gallery," repeated Miss Maud.

"Why, my dear Maud, no one sits in the gallery but townspeople, and musicians' wives and dressmakers. I don't know I'm sure what on earth you can mean."

"You shall know, of course, everything I mean."

"And, you know, I object to our having any more of that masquerading—remember that."

"Perfectly; I'll do nothing but exactly what you like. I promise to do nothing unless you agree to it. You shall know all my plans—isn't that fair?"

"Yes; but what are they?"

"I have only a vague idea now; but we can talk them over when you have written your letter; recollect, in little more than half an hour the servant takes the letters to the post. But write on your own paper with the Hermitage at the top of the sheet, and—yes—if you can be very quick, I'll send the letter to the post-office at Dalworth; it will be better than the Roydon post-mark."

"Yes, Roydon might set him thinking, if you don't want to tell him now."

"No, nothing, except what I have said. I'll never see him more if you do—you promise me that?"

"Certainly, you shall read the letter when it is written."

"There now, you are a good girl, Max; I'll stay here for it; and I'll get Lexton to send a man riding to Dalworth."

"Now you mustn't talk, or make the least noise," said Miss Max, as she opened her desk. "I must not make a mistake."

And soon the scraping of her industrious pen was the only sound audible in the room.

In the mean time, Maud took Mr. Marston's letter to the window, and leaning lightly with her shoulder to the angle of the wall, she looked it over, and thought what a gentleman-like hand it was, and then she read and re-read it, and with a pretty glow in her cheeks, and her large eyes fired and saddened, she laid it on the table beside Maximilla, just as that romantic accomplice, having written the address on the envelope, turned round to place it in her hand.

"No, there isn't time to read it. Shut it up now, and let me have it. Lexton will put a stamp on it."

And with these words Maud kissed her with a fond little caress, and ran away with the note in her hand.

CHAPTER XXXII. DRIFTING.

And now people begin to observe and whisper something strange. Now, in fact, begins an amazing infatuation. It shows itself in the cold, proud matron, Lady Vernon, at first covertly, afterwards with less disguise.

The young officer, Charles Vivian, is to make a stay of some weeks.

For a day or two Lady Vernon appears to take no particular interest in him. But gradually by the third day of his sojourn her manner, either disclosing a foregone liking, or indicating the growth of a new passion, changes.

It changes at first covertly; afterwards the signs that excite general comment show themselves with less disguise.

As Miss Max remarks to Maud, with a little pardonable exaggeration, "She can't take her eyes off him, she can hear no one else speak, while he is talking in the same room to any one. She is quite rapt up in him." As Miss Jones, Maud's maid, phrases it in her confidential talk, she is "light on him," meaning thereby, under the influence of a craze.

People who come in upon her solitude in her room, suddenly, say they find her agitated, and often in floods of tears. All agree that she has grown silent and absent, and seems never happy now but when she is near him.

It was one of those mysterious cases which honest Jack Falstaff would have accounted for by the hypothesis, "I'm bewitched with the rogue's company. If the rascal have not given me medicines to make me love him, I'll be hanged; it could not be else; I have drunk medicines."

I suppose she guarded her language very

carefully, and even her looks, in actual conversation with Captain Vivian, for that which appeared plain enough to other people seemed hidden from him. It was discussed in the servants' hall and in the housekeeper's room.

The unanimous opinion was that Captain Vivian had only to speak and that the new year would see him the chosen of the handsome widow and lord of Roydon Hall. People wondered, indeed, how he could be so stupid as not to see what was so plain to every one else. But they could not know how cautious Lady Vernon was in her actual conversation with him, not, by sign or word, to commit herself in the least degree.

It was clear enough, however, to the household of Roydon in what direction all this was tending, and a general agitation and uneasiness trembled through every region and articulation of that huge and, hitherto, comfortable body.

Such was the attitude of affairs when Maud Vernon, with her cousin Maximilla, drove over to the Grange to pay the Tinterns a visit.

Mr. Dawe had taken his departure after a day or two with a promise, made upon consideration, as one might conjecture, for undivulged reasons of his own, to return in less than a week.

The prominent brown eyes and furrowed, inflexible face removed, a sense of liberty seemed to visit Captain Vivian suddenly. His spirits improved, and he evidently began to enjoy Maud Vernon's society more happily. They took walks together; they talked over books; they compared notes about places they had visited, and she began to think that the intellectual resources of Roydon were improved, since the time when she used to insist that Dr. Malkin alone redeemed that region of the earth from Bœotian darkness.

"Take care, my dear, that our plaintive invalid doesn't turn out instead a very robust lover," said Miss Max, in one of her nocturnal conferences with Maud. "*There* will be a pretty comedy!"

"How can you like to make me uncomfortable?" said Maud.

"Upon my word, if I don't, I think Barbara will," replied Maximilla. "Don't you see how she is devoted to him?"

"I can't understand her. Sometimes I think she is, and sometimes I doubt it," said Miss Vernon.

"Well—yes. She is, perhaps, in a state of vacillation—a state of struggle; but she thinks of nothing else, and, it seems to me, can scarcely hear, or even see, any other human being."

"You may be very sure I shan't allow him to make love to me," said Maud, with proper dignity.

"Unless you wish to come to pulling of caps with your mamma, for the entertainment of the rest of the world, you had better not, I think," answered Miss Max, with a laugh.

"But, I tell you, I should not permit it, and he never has made the slightest attempt to make love to me," repeated Maud, blushing.

"Well, it is rather a good imitation. But Barbara does not seem to see it—I don't think, indeed, she has had an opportunity—and if she's happy why should I interfere?" said Miss Max.

And so that little talk ended.

Coming out of church on Sunday, the three ladies from Roydon and Captain Vivian, who felt strong enough for one of Mr. Foljambe's sermons, and sat in the corner of the great Vernon pew, stood for a moment on the step of the side porch, while the carriage drove up to receive them. The grenadier footmen in blue and gold opened the door and let down the steps, and Lady Vernon, following Miss Max, stepped, lightly as a girl, into her carriage. The Tinterns, Mr., Mrs., and Miss, at the same moment emerged from the holy shadow under the stained and grooved gothic arch with a similar intent. Lady Vernon from the carriage bowed to them with her cold, haughty smile, which Mr. Tintern answered with his hat in his hand, high above his head in the ceremonious old fashion, and with a countenance beaming all over with manly servility.

The chocolate and gold liveries, standing at the flank, awaited the departure of the blue and gold to do their devoir by the more ponderous carriage of the humbler Grange family.

While Mr. and Mrs. Tintern made their smiling salutations, and answered the remark which Maximilla Medwyn called out to the effect that it was a charming day, Maud thought she remarked from pretty Ethel Tintern a quick and odd glance at Captain Vivian, who, not having been presented to the Tintern ladies, was industriously digging a tiny stalk of groundsel from a chink in the old worn step, at the flank of which he stood.

It was very natural that the young lady should steal that quick glance at the un-

observant stranger. It was the undefinable character of it that struck Maud.

There seemed neither curiosity nor recognition. It was momentary — a dark look, pained and shrunken. It was gone, quite, in a moment, and Ethel, as Maud with a hurried pressure of her hand was about to take her place in the carriage, said softly:

"You must come to see me to-morrow or next day. You owe us a visit, you know. *Do.*"

"I will, certainly," promised Maud, smiling. And in a moment more she was in her place, and, followed by Captain Vivian, the door closed upon her; and the smiling faces and stately liveries whirled away over the gritty gravel of the churchyard road.

"This has been your first Sunday at church since your illness. It was rather longer than usual. Mr. Foljambe's sermons don't often exceed twenty minutes. I hope you are not doing too much?"

This question of Lady Vernon's, and Captain Vivian's polite disclaimer, were the only contributions toward conversation which fell from the little party as they drove home.

"Mr. Mapleson told me that mamma said she would have the main street of the village watered every Sunday, and she hasn't given any order, I suppose, about it. See what a state we are in! Covered with dust. I must ask Mr. Mapleson why," said Maud to Miss Max in the hall.

"Well, it is a bore," she answered; "we can't sit down in these things. Come up. I want to tell you I've just found a note on the table. No, it's not from the person you think. I see you're blushing."

"Now, don't be a goose," said Maud.

"Although it's not so bad a guess, as you shall hear when you come to my room. I told you, you remember, that my gossiping maid said that Captain Vivian sent two letters to the Grange; Captain Vivian's man told her, but she could make out nothing more. She has not an idea to whom they were written. He does not know Miss Tintern nor Mrs. Tintern, and I don't see what he could write to old Tintern about; but the note I have got is from such a charming creature, younger than Barbara, and a widow—Lady Mardykes. She is a sister of Mr. Marston's, and she has, besides her place at Golden Friars, such a pretty place, about five-and-thirty or forty miles from this, and she is one of my very dearest friends. She asks me to go and see her immediately, and I must introduce you. You will be charmed with her, and she, I know, with you."

"Is there any chance of Mr. Marston's being there? If there is, I certainly shan't go," said Maud.

"None in the world. He is to be with his father till Thursday, don't you recollect, he tells us all about it in his letter, and on Friday he will be at the ball at Wymering. Suppose we go and see her to-morrow. Do you know I have been suspecting a little that Captain Vivian's letter was to her. But she could not be such a fool as to throw herself away upon him."

"Very well, then, let us take the carriage and go to the Grange to-morrow. So that's agreed."

In pursuance of this plan they did actually drive over to the Grange next day.

Artful Miss Max was rather anxious to induce Captain Vivian to accompany them. It would have amused her active mind to observe that gallant gentleman's proceedings. But as if he suspected her design, he very adroitly, but politely, evaded the suggestion. So she and Maud went alone.

The Grange was a pretty house, a little later than the Tudor style. Driving up through the rather handsome grounds, they had hardly got a peep at the comfortable steep-gabled house, when Maud exclaims:

"There is Ethel — who is that with her?"

"Dear me! That is Lady Mardykes, I'm sure. I'm so glad to see her! They are looking at the flowers; suppose we get out."

So down they got, and the ladies before the hall-door, among the flowers, looked up, and came towards them with smiles.

CHAPTER XXXIII. A WARNING.

A GREAT kissing ensued upon the grass, and a shaking of hands, and Maud was introduced to Lady Mardykes, whom she liked instantaneously.

A face that must have been very pretty, and was still interesting—gentle, gay, and frank—was before her. But she was much older than her brother: a daughter by an earlier marriage.

This lady evidently took a fancy to Maud, and when they had talked a little, and began to grow to know one another better, after a short conversation aside with Maximilla, during which Maud saw that goodnatured old maid look once or twice at her, Lady Mardykes, coming over to her, began to talk to her again.

"I should have gone to Roydon to see Lady Vernon," she said, "only that I had doubts as to her liking it; and perhaps it is better to put it off to another time. There have been so many unlucky vexations, and I know she and papa don't visit, so you will understand why I don't go to see you at Roydon. But you must promise to come to me for a few weeks to Carsbrook. I shan't be going to Mardykes till next year, perhaps; I should rather have had you there. All about Golden Friars is so very beautiful. But I think you will say that Carsbrook is a pretty place, and if I can persuade Maximilla Medwyn to come to meet you, I'm sure you will find it pleasant. I'll consult with her as to how best to invite you."

Maud was very well pleased with this little plan; and now old Mr. Tintern came forth upon the grass, with his agreeable greetings and chilly smiles, and Maximilla and he began to talk, and their talk grew gradually, it seemed, a little earnest. And when the gong summoned them to luncheon, he seemed still a little thoughtful now and then during that repast.

They walked out again through the glass door after luncheon, and Mr. Tintern, in the same mood, accompanied them, and once more fell into talk with Miss Max.

Ethel Tintern was now beside Maud, and the two young ladies sat down upon a rustic seat among the flowers.

"We are forlorn damsels here; our gentlemen have all gone off to fish at Dalworth. Papa wanted Lady Mardykes and me to go in the carriage, and I am so glad now we did not. We should have missed you. Do you know I think we girls have much more resource than men. They won't entertain themselves as we do, and it is so hard to amuse them. You have a guest at present at Roydon?"

"Yes, Captain Vivian."

"Yes; and Miss Medwyn thinks he is a little taken with you?"

"She divides him between me and Lady Mardykes at present, and when you are acquainted, I dare say she'll give you a share."

Ethel laughed, and said suddenly:

"By-the-bye, I was so near forgetting the pyracanth! It is beginning to look rather passé; it is the very last, but she can judge pretty well what it must be when it is in its best looks."

So she got Miss Max to look at the flower, which she held up for her inspection in its glass, and there ensued an animated bit of floral gossip, in which Mr. Tintern, who was skilled in flowers, and had won a few years since two or three prizes, one especially, which made a great noise, for his ranunculuses, took a leading part.

Then Mr. Tintern withdrew, and Miss Max, Lady Mardykes, and Mrs. Tintern talked together, and Ethel, alone once more with Maud Vernon, said, as if the long parenthesis counted for nothing:

"About that Captain Vivian—take my advice, and don't allow him to pay you the slightest attention."

"Really——"

"Yes," says Miss Tintern, who is cruelly plucking a white rose, petal by petal, asunder, and watching the process intently.

"Yes, but I assure you he hasn't," said Maud.

"Miss Medwyn thinks differently," said Miss Tintern, with gentle diligence continuing the process of discerption.

"I don't perceive it, if he does," answered Maud. "But why do you warn me?" and she smiled a little curiously as she put her question.

"Because I know certain things about him, and he is aware that I do, that ought to prevent him. You mustn't repeat a word I say, mind. Does he seem to wish to avoid me?"

"Quite the contrary. He talks as if he should like so much to make your acquaintance."

"That I don't understand," said Ethel, plucking three or four leaves together from her dishevelled rose.

"I understood him to wish that I should take the first opportunity of introducing him."

"I should not like that at all," said Ethel, with a tone and look of marked annoyance, her eyes still watching the flower she was stripping leaf by leaf.

"Is it anything discreditable?" asked Maud.

"No, not that, certainly not, but it might easily become so. You see, I'm talking riddles, but, indeed, I can't help it. I can't say anything more at present than I have told you, and so much I had a right to say, and am very glad I have had an opportunity, and for the present, as I said, I can give you nothing but that, my earnest piece of advice. And take care of yourself, I counsel you, in this false, shabby, wicked world."

With these words, Ethel Tintern got up, and broke what remained of the rose between her fingers, and crumpled it up and

threw it away. She saw Miss Max walking quickly toward them, with the air of a chaperon in search of her charge, and she guessed that the hour had come for saying good-bye.

"My dear Maud, I had no idea how late it was," said Maximilla, before she reached them. "I'm so afraid we shall be late for our appointment with your mamma. It is twenty minutes past three now. Had not we better go?"

Maud was a little alarmed, for with her to be late for an appointment with her mother was a very serious matter indeed, so she consulted her watch, which, for a lady's timepiece, was a very fair one, being seldom more than twenty minutes wrong, either way, and finding there signs corroborative of Miss Max's calculations, "there was parting in hot haste," and time for little more than a hurried inquiry whether Ethel was going to the Wymering ball.

"Yes, she thought so; that is, if her papa went; her mamma was not well enough."

And so, kissing and good-byes, and a very friendly reminder from Lady Mardykes, who said she expected to be at home at Carsbrook in ten days, and that Maud would be sure to hear from her about that time.

And now they are whirling homeward, at the brilliant pace of the high-bred horses of Roydon, and Maud says to her companion:

"Ethel has just been warning me, for reasons she won't tell, against permitting Captain Vivian to pay me attentions. Not a very likely thing, but I'm sure she means it kindly, and she was really quite earnest, but she charged me not to tell it to mortal, so you must promise not to mention it."

So you see how well the secret was guarded.

"Upon my life, this Captain Vivian, invalid though he be, is beginning to grow into a very formidable sort of hero. Mr. Tintern was talking about him, and I said, just to try what he would say, that I thought Barbara had taken rather a fancy to him, and he took it up not at all jestingly, but very seriously indeed, and he told me, confidentially, that he had heard the same thing from another quarter, and that he believed it. So, my dear Maud, I rather think," continued Miss Max, who saw as far into millstones as most old ladies, "that we may connect Miss Ethel's warning with her father's curious information. Don't you see?"

"Upon my word, the situation grows tragical!" said Maud, with a laugh.

"It would be an unlucky business for Mr. Tintern, of course, if Barbara took it into her head to marry, because it might extinguish any chance, and you may be sure he thinks it a better one than it is, of his succeeding to a share of the Vernon property. Dear me, who are those?"

The exclamation and question were suggested by the emergence of Lady Vernon and Captain Vivian from the church-door of Roydon, which the carriage was now almost passing.

"Rehearsing the ceremony, I suppose," laughed Miss Max.

A footman was waiting outside, and the sexton followed the lady and gentleman out, and locked the old church-door.

Lady Vernon had been showing Captain Vivian the monument which he had seen but imperfectly the day before. Lady Vernon saw them, and bowed and smiled to Miss Max as they passed.

"I sometimes think Barbara is not looking very well—pale and tired. I don't know why she fags herself so miserably, I'm sure. But if I told her so, I should only have my head in my hand. There are some people, my dear, who hate advice, and, on the whole, do you know, I rather think they are right."

They were driving up the avenue by this time, and were soon in the court-yard.

HORSES AND HEDGES.

"One man may steal his neighbour's horse, while another may not look over the hedge." So the old proverb expresses that strange partiality of society which allows privileges to some, and forbids rights to others. No one knows how or why it is that social justice holds her balance so unevenly, and that denial and allowance are meted out with such startling want of uniformity. It seems as if the favouritism of nature and the goodwill of fate have more to do with the affairs of men than modern philosophy allows; and that some human souls come into the world labelled "with care," and go through life in consequence protected by all the unseen powers about us, and evilly entreated by none. It seems a little hard, though, on those who have not come into life so labelled, when they find themselves taken into custody, sharp and sudden, for looking over the hedge, when their neighbour there has

stolen *his* neighbour's horse, and is riding off in peace and perfect security. They meant no harm when they looked over the hedge; perhaps they might have broken the Tenth Commandment and have coveted, but that was the full extent to which their predatory designs were carried; yet they are punished as severely as if they had done the thing which it only seemed possible they were thinking of doing, while he who has consummated his offence goes on his way rewarded and rejoicing.

Do you know Loosefish? Then you know a man whose private life is one which, to put it mildly, would scarcely bear publicity and the light of day. I do not say that Loosefish is particularly respected; that he would be singled out as an arbiter of public morals, an authority on the delicate chivalry of finance, or that grave divines would consult with him as to the deepest sense of an obscure passage; still less would a man, if worldly wise to any appreciable extent, intrust him with negotiable securities or a lump sum in cash uncounted. But he gets on pretty well nevertheless; and if not singled out for peculiar public honour, yet receives his full share of that floating consideration which is general property; and society seems to have entered into a kind of conspiracy to shut its eyes to his flagrant misdeeds, and to keep a discreet silence on his more highly coloured foibles. Loosefish thus becomes an example—of a sorrowfully disastrous kind. If he could sail so near to the wind as he did in those acceptances of his, and yet keep his craft moderately trim, and bring her into port at last, why may not others do the same? So a silly youth, here and there, thinks he will imitate the great master, and fling to the winds all very careful distinction between strict honour and loose principle. But before he has had time to more than make a show of heaving his honesty overboard, the whole ship's crew sailing with him is at his heels, and no one louder than Loosefish himself. Reproached, reminded that he had done this and that far worse than anything the poor tyro in evil has attempted, Loosefish looks superb, and answers grandly, "Granted, my dear boy; but I was not caught, and you were."

So it all resolves itself into this: "I was not caught, and you were." This is the sum total of the difference between the victorious Loosefish and the beaten imitator; but the sum total tells us nothing of the working, nothing of the how and the why this difference is made; how it comes to pass that the one was not pursued by the social police, who yet were cognisant of his evil deeds, and why the other was so unmercifully handled, for only the appearance of a minor misdemeanour. There are men now serving out their time as "Numbers," with cropped hair and in felon's dress, who have not acted half so dishonestly as Mr. So-and-So, who lives in a fine house, has footmen and horses, and gives dinners, to which the best in the land come gladly when they are invited. But Mr. So-and-So was labelled "with care," and accordingly his friends and relations took care of him; and the more they suspected him the more they agreed to stick close to him, so that the outside barbarians could see nothing; and the more interlaced the barriers they formed about him the greater the pressure put on each as to the necessity of keeping it up. For, you see, it became in a manner the interest of each and all to uphold Mr. So-and-So to the last. By their partisanship they had become, in a certain sense, implicated; and to have proved their friend a rogue after all these years would have been to have proved themselves the same, or fools—the complement of the first. But the poor forlorn wretch working now as a Number, with his hair cropped, had no such phalanx to defend him and throw dust in the eyes of society and the police. Fate left him to fight his own battle; and Fortune, the dainty jade, turned up her nose at him as not to her taste; wherefore, when he looked over the hedge into the field whence Mr. So-and-So had stolen that handsome horse of his, he was collared, handcuffed, and arraigned, and, finally, sent to pick oakum and work the mill, as the best means the law could devise for curing him of his dangerous propensities.

Mrs. Golightly moves in what is called the best society. At her house assemble wits, beauties, men of mark and women of mind, the rich and the learned, the pure and the thoughtful; though perhaps fewest of these last two. Yet, making all deductions needful, her society is good, and even choice, and none but the "unco guid," more pharisaical than correct, are unwilling to be on her visiting list. Mrs. Golightly, nevertheless, has her little histories; and what they are would not edify the world if told at full length. The world knows some part of them, and guesses at more; but it takes no notice. The soul which inhabits this special body has been labelled "with care;" consequently, Mrs.

Golightly is of those who may steal the horse in broad day, and not come to the dock for their deeds. Society makes itself blind in her favour, as in the case of Loosefish; and there is a tacit conspiracy all round to wink and not to see. She tries the faculty of winking pretty severely; there is no question about that; and the tighter the world shuts up its eyes the more glaring are the flags flaunted before its lids, immunity having the universal tendency of emboldening sinners.

What crime had Mrs. Tripper committed that an unkind fate should have thrown her into Mrs. Golightly's way? Little Mrs. Tripper was a silly little woman if you will, but hitherto she had been harmless. She had done no good in life, but she had done no harm; and though she had frittered away both time and powers, she had not put either to evil uses. In an unlucky hour, silly Mrs. Tripper made the acquaintance of favoured Mrs. Golightly, and forthwith resolved on imitation. She saw how her friend stole horses in broad daylight, and with absolute impunity; so she resolved to try her luck—at least, in looking over the hedge. But the social police was down on her. In the twinkling of an eye, in the space of a minute, before she had done more than merely look, she was taken into drawing-room custody, and marched off to Coventry, while Mrs. Golightly stabled her stolen studs, and drove then openly in the park. Was that justice, think you? Poor silly little Mrs. Tripper did not think so, when she was marched off to Coventry, for only the appearance of things—for only looking over the hedge; leaving her friend and bad example safe in the very Mecca of consideration, with a stable full of unrighteous teams!

Cases might be multiplied ad infinitum. The Misses Flasher, who go about with never a chaperon among them, and are always to be seen escorted by the handsomest officers of the set, yet who are asked everywhere, and will probably marry into the bosom of a dignitary's family; and the Misses Fastboy, who are all but cut, because they drove over to the picnic alone, having half a dozen young Cambridge men in tow; who can deny the patent proof that the one set of young hoydens has been sent into this life marked "with care," while the other set has been left to chance, which has made a bungle of her business, and landed them into a hopeless mess? The fact is, the world of human history seems to be regulated by much the same laws as those which rule the world of matter. Some characters are like egg-shells, and will not bear a rude touch; others are skins of parchment, which it would seem nothing can destroy; some are like garden flowers planted in favourable spots, cared for and protected; others like wayside weeds, which the straying cattle trample underfoot, and the first rough hand that wills may pluck and cast into the dust to perish. There is no such thing as impartiality in the judgments of men. The rule holds good for success as well as for immunity. You see some people do the most daring things, and yet they succeed. They paint the ugliest pictures, and they find critics to praise them and capitalists to buy; they write the most stupid books, and the world takes them down at a sitting, and wonders at their unfathomable learning; they set forth the wildest plays, and take the town by storm. But let others, not born to the possession of good fortune, attempt only half their audacity, in the same line, and they are forthwith made into mince-meat, and served up as a sacrifice to the infernal deities. No one need hope to understand why. All that can be said is, some men may steal a horse, but others may not look over the hedge; and some souls are sent into this great packing-house of life labelled "with care," and are consequently tenderly treated and gingerly handled; while others are just tumbled about anyhow, and come to grief and destruction by the way.

AN UNEXPECTED EXPOSTULATION.

It was late at night. The windows were curtained and the doors were closed. The shaded lamp cast a dim light about the room, and a not unpleasant circular glare upon my desk. I had been writing a good deal, and now and then dozing a little. I was gradually approaching that stage in prolonged toil when inclination for rest is apt to prevail over the attractions of effort. I stayed my hand and put down my pen. My eyes closed, and for a few minutes I lost consciousness. I was disturbed by the noise of some one coughing close by—a sharp, hacking cough. I looked up. A man—an entire stranger to me—was occupying an easy-chair placed over against my writing-table.

How he came there I don't know; but he *was* there. Not a ghost, of course. I

have no faith in such things. They have been time out of mind of great service to story-tellers, but even for fictional purposes I regard them now as rather exhausted and exploded contrivances. They have been brought on the scene too often; they have been decidedly overworked. Directly they are introduced one sees through them now; and the fact that one can do so, no longer occasions the awe, and chill, and thrill the story-teller had calculated upon producing. I agree with the man of science, who maintained that "ghosts proceed from the stomach"—a derivation clearly destructive of their claims to respect on the score of their romantic character.

Not a ghost, then, but a man simply—and yet of appearance sufficiently curious and exceptional, quite apart from the consideration that his presence in my study was most strange and unaccountable, to arouse my attention in regard to him, and to warrant my setting forth, as concisely as I may, some description of his personal peculiarities. For some minutes neither of us spoke. Meanwhile, I felt myself at liberty to study and scrutinise him very particularly.

What was most remarkable in his aspect was his expression of utter lassitude and exhaustion. His age could not readily be determined. There was certainly nothing suggestive of the freshness of youth about him; nor, on the other hand, did he manifest any marked symptoms of senility. His infirm and effete condition seemed less attributable to lapse of time than to some oppressive weight of care he had been compelled to sustain, or to his experience of some cruel measures of suffering. He was well dressed, but his clothes looked as though they had been made for a man of more substantial mould, and hung loosely about him. It might be that he had lost flesh and shrunk considerably since he had first assumed them. His features had undergone apparently that sharpening process to which prolonged ill-health subjects its victims. His nose, I noted, was peculiarly thin, angular, and projecting. The skin was drawn very tight across his bony and somewhat contracted forehead. From the wanness of his cheeks his mouth looked unduly large, and his teeth over prominent. His eyes were very lustreless, and had a tendency to roll about waywardly, and his heavy lids, a dull pink in colour, seemed with difficulty restrained from drooping and closing. His hair was long, straggling, dry, and dusty-looking. He had clearly devoted little attention to its arrangement. His whole appearance betokened deficiency in vital and muscular power. Yet his presence was gentlemanly altogether, although it conveyed a suspicion that physical decline had possibly relaxed somewhat his regard for social rules and usages. When he spoke, his voice was weak and flat in tone, and produced with some exertion. He accompanied his speech with a nervous jerking of his limbs, a swaying of his body, and a tossing of his head, that were decidedly distressing to observe. He reminded me of that famous figure in the fantoccini performance, which on a sudden loosens itself, and falls in fragments about the scene. Conditioned as he evidently was, it seemed imprudent of him to venture upon much abruptness of gesture, or precipitate change of pose. There was no saying what might result from hasty action of this kind on his part. His laugh struck me as hollow, wild, and discordant in the extreme. There are some laughs which are very catching, so to speak, and on the instant provoke mirth in the auditor, sometimes even to quite an extravagant extent; other laughs, from their strained and artificial quality—I have often heard such upon the stage, when the actors are required to simulate a joy which seems hardly justified by the words they have to utter, or the situation in which they appear—are depressing almost to despair. Whenever my visitor laughed, he produced echoes within me of a strangely dismal and disturbing kind.

"So, you're at it again," he said, half interrogatively, and half by way of comment.

I admitted that I had been pursuing my ordinary vocation.

"I thought as much." And here he laughed in a way that is always described in novels as "bitterly," and I suppose can only be so described. At the same time I may say that I have never found the description quite adequate or satisfactory.

"Let me off easy this time," he continued, laughing distressingly.

"What is it you want?" I asked. He moved about uneasily in his chair.

"To be let alone," he said, presently. "Drop me. Forget me. Ignore me."

"But who are you?"

"You know. Gad, you ought to! Why can't you let me alone?"

"I really fail to understand," I observed.

"Yes, of course, that's part of the business. I was quite prepared for that."

"I should be happy, if I could, to oblige you in any way."

"No doubt. But you won't. I've lived long enough — I've suffered enough — to know that. Almost since books were published——"

"Since the discovery of printing?"

"No, not quite so long as that. I was let off rather cheaply at first. I had not been found out. My existence, perhaps, wasn't known then. But gradually they dropped on to me; and they've never ceased dropping on to me since."

"Who dropped on you?"

"You, and the whole kit of you."

"Really——"

"No—it isn't true, and you never heard of such a thing, and you can't believe it, and it's not your doing. I know all about that. But things have come to a precious pass at last."

"If you would kindly explain a little."

"I was gradually collared. They approached me at first in an insinuating, carnying sort of way. They were deferential and considerate. Oh, so considerate." I think he swore here, but I don't feel quite sure. "I was 'dear,' and 'gentle,' and 'polite.' I don't mind owning I was conciliated—flattered a bit. I stood still and listened. Quickly they got the halter round my neck, and I was in custody for the rest of my days. And what I have had to endure!"

"But who and what are you?" I demanded anew, and this time rather peremptorily, for I own I felt annoyed at the man's extraordinary demeanour.

"That's right, bully me. You're capable of it. I was prepared for that. I'm accustomed to that."

I rose from my chair and confronted him.

"Sit down," he said. "I could see quite enough of you before. I don't want a scene with you, Heaven knows. I'll tell you who I am, though you know very well already, or ought to know. I'm the General Reader. There! You've heard that name before?"

I admitted that the term "General Reader" was not unfamiliar to me.

"I should think not, indeed," he said, with one of his most unpleasant laughs. "Haven't I just cause of complaint?"

I observed, not too confidently, that I wasn't aware that he suffered under any particular grievance.

"Haven't you been all at me, persecuting and oppressing me this many a long year? At first, I admit, I was let off easy. I said as much just now. Books weren't for me then. They were too good for me, or I wasn't good enough for them. It's much the same thing, I take it. But I was let off chiefly, I think, for a first-rate reason: I didn't know how to read! As soon as I did, you all made a dead set at me."

"Again, I ask, of whom are you speaking?"

"Authors, writers, compilers, adapters, copyists, essayists, historians, reviewers, journalists, penmen, reporters, novelists, dramatists." He paused for want of breath. "There," he resumed shortly, "is that list long enough for you?"

"But what have these people——"

"You're one of them! You know you are," he cried.

I disregarded the interruption. "How have they injured you?"

"How haven't they? Haven't they piled volume after volume upon me, until they've nearly flattened me out like an ironed shirt? Formerly they were content to address themselves for the most part to a class, a section of the community. Now they're all on to me, twenty—twenty?—a hundred at a time. You're a critic?"

I owned that I had sometimes written reviews. I left him, if he so chose, to dwell upon any discrepancy he might discern between his question and my reply. But he went on:

"And you've said of this book, 'Will give pleasure to the General Reader;' of that, 'Not above the capacity of the General Reader;' and of the other, 'Well suited to the requirements of the General Reader.'"

I admitted that I had sometimes availed myself of those and similar convenient phrases.

"Just so," he cried, with a spasmodic chuckle and a general twitching of his members. "I knew it. I said it. All the rubbish that's published is shot on to my head. Books are even made rubbishy on purpose now, with a view to pleasing me. Formerly, when a man wrote something that was especially deep, and sound, and valuable, and, of course, heavy, he knew at once it was no use bringing it to me—not a bit—that it was over my head, beyond my reach. With that state of things he was content. I need not say I was. But now he'll sprinkle his dull pages with bad jokes, chaff, flippancy, and vulgarity, and then you, and such as you, will urge the General Reader to buy it, and, what's worse, to read it. Everything now is supposed to suit

the General Reader. His maw is big enough to shove anything into. He has stomach for every known subject. He has the digestion of an ostrich. Now he's made to swallow paving-stones, and now he's surfeited with whipped syllabub. 'Seneca cannot be too heavy, nor Plautus too light.' That's a quotation, that is. Shakespeare, you know. Bless you, other folks can quote besides you." He surveyed me as he said this with an air, I thought, of quite superfluous significance.

"Twaddle, imbecility, tiresome lectures, trite moralising, common-places, balderdash, jargon, tom-foolery, slipslop, palaver, drivel; that's the diet you've been recommending me. Has it done me good? How do I look? Sick? Ill?"

"Sick and ill," I said.

"Can you wonder? How would you have liked it yourself? After all, you know I'm only human, a man and a brother —that kind of thing. Do I look dyspeptic?"

"You do," I answered, frankly.

"Is it surprising? Think what you and such as you have made me undergo."

"But what would you have me do in the future?"

"Spare me. Have some mercy, some little consideration. You've overdone it, indeed you have. The General Reader has his limits. His back will only bear a certain burden, and I declare just now, if you put another volume on it, though but a thin duodecimo, it will give way as sure as fate. Don't, then. He isn't learned, you know. He doesn't set up for being of much account; but, as a rule, the General Reader's willing, and can be fairly amused at a cheap rate. But don't overload him, don't over-drive him, and, above all, don't overcudgel him. If you do, he'll only drop."

"I am willing," I said, "indeed, I am most anxious to serve you, and please you, if you'll only show me how."

"It's very simple. When you're going to write of this or that, that it's 'certain to entertain the General Reader,' just think if it really is so certain; ask yourself whether it entertained *you*, and then consider whether, in truth, it will entertain *him*. Think, also, how many other people may, at the same moment, be writing and recommending other things certain to entertain the General Reader. And the same with what's erudite, and valuable, and interesting. I've got to dread all those terms. They make me shiver and turn goose-flesh all over. Generally speaking, indeed, draw it mild, or I won't answer for the consequences. Spare the General Reader; he hasn't deserved the treatment he has received at the hands of you and all your lot. Think of the life you've led me. Surely I deserve a little consideration."

He paused, and for the moment I felt myself unable to make him any reply. I mused over what he had been saying. It did occur to me that possibly there was some reason in his complaint, and that of late years there had been rather what he called "a dead set" made at the General Reader.

"But you skip a good deal, I suppose?" I said, presently.

"Skip? I should think I did. There had been an end of me long ago if I hadn't skipped. But even skipping's trying when you have to do too much of it. I've skipped sometimes until I'd hardly a breath left in my body, or strength in my fingers to turn a leaf. I owe much to skipping, I admit; but one can't be always skipping. I don't think I need trouble you any more just now," he added, after a minute's silence.

"You're very good," I said. "It *is* late."

"Only bear me in mind, and urge upon others to deal forbearingly with me in the future. Please use all your influence to achieve that result. Publish what I have told you if you like."

"Do you think it would entertain the General Reader?" I inquired.

He groaned. "You're hard upon me still," he said. "Upon my word you are. But—risk it. It may do some good. At the worst, it will be but one more drop in the cup. Yes, risk it."

I passed my hand across my tired eyes, thinking how I could give literary shape to his conversation. When I looked up he had gone. He had not even said good-night. His departure had been as noiseless and mysterious as his entry.

However, I have followed his counsel. I have risked it.

SQUIRE COE AND HIS DAUGHTERS.

[At a meeting of archæologists at Bury St. Edmunds, a paper was read on Squire Coe, of West Row, in the county of Suffolk, who was in the habit, when he wanted a new wig, of having his daughters' hair cut to supply the material.]

FLAT is the shire of the southern folk,
And its streams are sluggish, very,
And they say you seldom hear a joke
In the town of Saint Edmonds Bury;
But that's a story too absurd
To satisfy psychologists,
And I guess that numerous jokes were heard
In the days of archæologists:
When light was thrown on topics dark
Beside the lazy river Larke.

A golden shire of plenteous corn,
Which in August tide grows yellow,
And for jolly squires that wheat is shorn
Who love old ale and mellow.
But from ancient habits, well men know,
In these times we vastly vary:
And where's Squire Coe of fair West Row
In the days of William and Mary;
The squire who with punch defied all care,
And who made a wig of his daughters' hair?

Lo there they sit, those maidens three,
A sight for all beholders,
With viol or book upon shapely knee,
Long locks over fair white shoulders:
No trace of grief in their mien appears,
And they look demurely merry,
Though they wait, alas! for the fatal shears
Which will come with the barber from Bury.
No fairer Anglians e'er drew breath
Than Judith, Anne, Elizabeth.

Ah, what would say the Suffolk girl,
In these days of advanced opinion,
If asked to surrender one bright curl
That veils her voluminous chignon?
What Suffolk squire, though never a hair
His sterile scalp would harbour,
To shear his daughters' tresses, dare
Send for the Bury barber?
'Tis well Squire Coe in the mould lies low,
Since this is a world he scarce would know.

PROTECTIVE RESEMBLANCES.

The conformity of tints which commonly exists between animals and the medium by which they are surrounded, has long been noticed by writers on natural history, but, until lately, has never been satisfactorily explained. It was generally imputed to the direct action of climate, soil, or food; but this explanation is contradicted by many well-known facts. Wild rabbits, for example, are of a greyish-brown colour, resembling the fern and other vegetation amongst which they live when not enjoying their underground protection; but these same rabbits, when domesticated, without any change of climate or food, rapidly vary into black or white races; and similar phenomena occur in pigeons, mice, &c.

Again, it is well known that the wings of several insects (as the walking-stick insect, the leaf insect, &c.) assume not only the tint of the bark or leaf on which they rest, but the exact rugosity of the former, or the outline and veining of the latter; and these similarities cannot be referred to climate or to food, since in many cases the insect does not feed on the substance which it resembles, and the genus may have a widely extended habitat. Two distinguished travellers and naturalists, Mr. Bates and Mr. Wallace (especially the latter), have recently attempted to show, with considerable success, that these problems may be solved by Darwin's Theory of Natural Selection. In order to make the solution of these questions intelligible to the general reader, we must give a sketch of the leading phenomena that may be classed under the head of useful or protective resemblances. Our facts on this subject have been drawn mainly from Mr. Wallace's essay, On Mimicry and other Protective Resemblances among Animals, originally published in the Westminster Review for July, 1867, and reprinted in his Contributions to the Theory of Natural Selection, 1870, but in part also from Mr. Bates's Contributions to the Insect Fauna of the Amazon, in the Linnæan Transactions for 1862, and from a paper by Mr. Andrew Murray, On the Disguises of Nature, in the Edinburgh New Philosophical Journal for January, 1860.

Nature provides for the concealment that is useful to many animals, and essential to some, by colouring them with such tints as may best serve them to escape from their enemies, or to entrap their prey. That desert animals are almost always desert-coloured is illustrated by the lion, which, when crouched upon the sand or among rocks and stones, must be almost invisible; by the camel, and by almost all species of antelopes. The desert birds are still more protected by the closer resemblance of their tints to the ground on which they live. The stonechats, the larks, the quails, the goat-suckers, and the grouse, which abound in the North African and Asiatic deserts, are all tinted and mottled so as closely to resemble the soil of the district they inhabit. The Reverend Dr. Tristram, in describing the ornithology of North Africa, observes, that in the Sahara a modification of colour which shall be assimilated to that of the surrounding country is absolutely necessary for the preservation of the animals of that region; and that, without exception, the upper plumage of every bird, the fur of all the smaller mammals, and the skin of every snake and lizard, is of one uniform isabelline or sand colour.

Turning to the Arctic regions, we see the white colour for a similar reason preponderating in the animal kingdom, as affording the best concealment amidst snow-fields and ice-hummocks. The polar bear and the American polar hare, which never voluntarily leave the regions of ice and snow, are permanently white, while the Arctic fox, the Alpine hare, and the ermine, become white in the winter only, because in the regions to which they migrate in the summer that colour would be a source of danger rather than a means of protection.

Among Arctic birds, the snow-bunting, the jer-falcon, and the snowy owl, are doubtless in a great measure protected by their white colour. Perhaps the best example of protective colouring in birds is afforded by the ptarmigan, whose summer plumage exactly harmonises with the lichen-coloured stones among which it sits, while in winter, its white plumage renders its detection on the snow almost impossible. No sportsman can have failed to notice how closely the colour of the common hare, while resting in its form, resembles that of its surroundings; and how that of the grouse and of the partridge respectively resemble the tints of the heather and stubble in which they are sought after.

Nocturnal animals, as a rule, possess the least conspicuous colours, and must be quite invisible at times when white or very black forms would be readily perceived.

It is only in tropical forests, which never lose their foliage, that parrots and other birds of a green colour are to be found. A tint that would be elsewhere singularly conspicuous thus serves to conceal them amongst the dense leaves.

We have hitherto noticed merely the general conformity of colour between animals and their surroundings; cases, however, not very unfrequently occur in which there is a special adaptation. To this latter category belong the beautiful markings of the tiger, jaguar, and most other large cats. The vertical stripes, which are so conspicuous on the body of the tiger, closely assimilate with the vertical stems of the bamboo jungles in which that animal hides himself, and thus actually assist in concealing him from his victims. Excepting the lion, tiger, and puma (which has an ashy-brown uniform fur, nearly resembling the bark of the branches to which it is in the habit of closely adhering when waiting for its prey to pass underneath), all the other large cats have spotted skins, which tend to blend them with the background of the thick foliage amongst which they dwell. Amongst birds, we have numerous cases of a similar nature. The Duke of Argyll (in the Reign of Law, pp. 191, 192) points out that in the woodcock "one very peculiar colour is introduced into the plumage, which exactly corresponds with a particular stage in the decay of fallen leaves, namely, that in which the browns and yellows of the autumn rot away into the pale, ashy skeletons which lie in thousands under every wood in winter." In snipes, as the same writer observes, there is a remarkable series of straw-coloured feathers running along the back and shoulders, which perfectly imitates the general effect of the bleached vegetable stalks, common on the ground which these birds frequent.

Reptiles present us with many similar illustrations of the same nature. The little green tree-frogs (which may be seen in a glass case in the Zoological Gardens), almost all the tropical tree-snakes, and the iguanas and other arboreal lizards, closely resemble the foliage by which they are surrounded; and there is a North American frog that so closely resembles, in tint, the lichen-covered walls and rocks on which it is found, that until it moves it is almost perfectly safe from detection. The crocodile and alligator, in floating passively down the muddy streams, are so like the trunks of trees, that the unwary animal drinking at the water's edge only recognises the deception when it is too late to avoid the danger.

Passing from Reptiles to Fishes, we may note how complete is the resemblance between the sandy bottom of the sea and the upper surface of the flounder or the skate. In our own temperate seas the fishes, although beautifully, are seldom gorgeously coloured, while the fishes swarming amongst the tropical coral reefs resemble in brilliancy of colouring the magnificent polyps amidst which they swim. Mr. Wallace directs attention to a very curious case of this kind of adaptation as occurring in the Sea-horses (Hippocampus) of Australia, "some of which bear long foliaceous appendages resembling seaweed, and are of a brilliant red colour. They live among seaweed of the same hue, so that when at rest they must be quite invisible." There are some slender green Pipe-fish in the aquarium of the Zoological Society, which, when they have attached themselves by their prehensile tails to some fixed object, float about, looking exactly like certain well-known water plants.

The Mollusca do not furnish any striking resemblances to particular objects, but if we turn to the Annulata we find the hue of the green, purple, and red seaweeds exactly reproduced in the Nemertians and other marine worms, while amongst the Hydrozoa or Polyps some of the Actiniæ afford good examples of special protective colouring. "I can hardly suggest," says Mr. Andrew Murray, "a more perfect one than the Actinia troglodytes in a sandy pool, its tentacles being so exactly marbled like a sandy bottom that the pool may be

paved with them all expanded, and yet the casual observer—ay, more, the attentive but uninstructed eye—never see one!" Mr. Brady (in Nature, vol. ii.) relates that while dredging in the Clyde he found numerous small star-fishes (Ophicoma bellis) which were embedded in masses of Laminaria roots, and the deep purpled colour of the two was so similar that, although he held in his hand a root containing half a dozen star-fishes, he could not detect a single one until they revealed themselves by their movements. It is in the sub-kingdom Articulata and the class Insecta that this principle is most fully and singularly developed.

We shall limit the selection of our illustrations to the three great orders of Coleoptera or beetles, Orthoptera, including soothsayers, walking-sticks, leaf insects, locusts, &c., and Lepidoptera, which include butterflies and moths. In the tropics there are, says Mr. Wallace, thousands of species of Coleoptera, which, during the day, rest upon the bark of dead or fallen trees, and which are delicately mottled with grey and brown tints, blending so completely with the usual colour of the bark that, at two or three feet distant, they are quite undistinguishable. Sometimes a species frequents only a single kind of tree; and in such cases there is usually an identity of colouring between the insect and the bark. Thus Mr. Bates found two species of long-horned beetles (Onychocerus) limited in this way to special kinds of trees growing on the banks of the Amazon, and so exactly resembling the bark in colour and rugosity, that until they moved they were absolutely invisible! Many species of Cicindelidæ, or tiger beetles, are similarly protected by their special colourings.

Cicindela campestris, the common tiger beetle, lives on grassy banks, and is of a beautiful deadened green colour, while C. maritima, which is found only on sandy sea-shores, is of a pale bronze yellow, almost identical in tint with the sand. In the Malay Islands Mr. Wallace found a very pale tiger beetle where the sand was coralline and nearly white; while wherever it was volcanic and black, a dark species of the same genus was sure to be found. "A large brown species was found only on dead leaves in forest paths, and one which was never seen except on the wet mud of salt marshes was of a glossy olive so exactly the colour of the mud as only to be distinguished when the sun shone by its shadow."

Mr. Bates found some beetles on the Amazon, which, from their hemispherical forms and pearly gold colour, resembled glittering dew-drops upon the leaves, and there are again the pill beetles (Byrrhus pilula), and many weevils, that, on the approach of danger, fold up their antennæ and legs so as completely to conceal them, counterfeit death, and take the form of a pellet of earth or stone, or sometimes even (as in Chlamydæ) of a bit of silver or copper ore, and roll off the leaf or other base on which they were resting.

Turning to the Lepidoptera, we find that the butterflies have all their bright colouring on the upper surfaces of all four wings, while the under surfaces are of a sombre, obscure tint; and this arrangement is obviously protective, because these insects always rest with the wings raised so as to conceal their dangerous beauty; while the moths, on the other hand, have their most marked colouring on the hind wings only, which, when they are at rest, are concealed by the dull tints of the upper wings. The most wonderful and undoubted case of protective resemblance in butterflies occurs in certain allied species of the genus Kallima, occurring on the Indian continent and the Malay archipelago. As this remarkable discovery was made by Mr. Wallace, we shall give the history of these insects nearly in his own words, although in an abbreviated form.

These butterflies are of a large size, and on their upper surface are adorned with a broad band of rich orange on a deep bluish ground. The under side is very variable in colour, but is always of some shade of ash, or brown, or ochre, resembling dead, dry, or decayed leaves. Between the apex of the upper wing on either side, which is prolonged into an acute point, and the end of the lower wing, which terminates in a short narrow tail, there runs a dark curved line, exactly representing the mid-rib of a leaf, and from this radiate on either side a few oblique lines resembling the lateral veins of a leaf. Not only have we here the exact imitation of the venation of a leaf, but we even find representations of leaves in every stage of decay, variously blotched, and mildewed, and pierced with holes, and, in many cases, sprinkled with powdery black dots arranged in patches and spots so like some of the minute fungi that grow on dead leaves, that it is impossible to avoid thinking, at first sight, that the butterflies themselves have been attacked by real fungi. As might have been assumed from

the analogy of many other cases, the habits of these butterflies are such as still further to aid their deceptive garb. Mr. Wallace, who has captured many of them in Sumatra, describes them as frequenting dry forests, and flying very swiftly. They were never seen to settle on a flower or a green leaf, but were often lost sight of in a mass of dead leaves. On such occasions they were generally searched for in vain, and were not perceived till they suddenly darted out from under the very eye of the observer, and again vanished some twenty yards or so further on. On a very few occasions the insect was detected in situ, and it was then noticed how completely it assimilates itself to the surrounding leaves. It sits on a nearly upright twig, the wings fitting closely back to back, and concealing the head and antennæ, which are retracted. The little tails, in which the hind wings terminate, represent the stalk of the leaf, which is kept in its place by the claws of the middle pair of feet, which are slender and inconspicuous. The irregular outline of the wings gives exactly the perspective effect of a shrivelled leaf. We have thus size, colour, form, markings, and habits all combining together to produce a disguise which may be regarded as absolutely perfect.

Turning from tropical butterflies to British moths, we may notice the striking harmony that exists between the colours of those that are on the wing in autumn and winter, and the prevailing tints of nature at these seasons. The Reverend J. Greene has shown that out of fifty-two species that fly in the autumn, when shades of yellow and brown prevail, no less than forty-two are of corresponding colours; while in the winter, when grey and silvery tints predominate, the moths, for the most part, are of corresponding hues. The well-known lappet moth and buff-tip moth, when at rest, respectively resemble in shape and colour a brown dry leaf, and the broken end of a lichen-covered branch; and the caterpillars of the Lepidoptera are also in many cases similarly protected. It is estimated that fully one-half of these caterpillars are green, and closely resemble the hue of the leaf on which they feed, and, as Mr. Andrew Murray has pointed out, when only a part of the body is exposed to view, the resemblance is often restricted to that part, as in the case of the larva of our commonest tiger beetle, which lives in a hole, from which its head and thorax alone protrude; these are of the same green colour as the perfect insect, while the rest of the body is of the ordinary whitish-yellow grub tint. Other caterpillars are like little brown, dead twigs, and, to complete the deception, are embossed at intervals with lumps resembling buds. The same distinguished naturalist has also directed attention to the close resemblance of the ground colour of the larva of the peacock moth with that of the young buds of the heather on which it feeds, while the pink spots with which it is decorated correspond with the flowers and flower-buds.

It is, however, in the order Orthoptera that we find the most remarkable examples of special resemblance. "Many species of the genus Mantis," says the Duke of Argyll, "are wholly modelled in the form of vegetable growths. The legs are made to imitate leaf-stalks, the body is elongated and notched so as to simulate a twig; the segment of the shoulders is spread out and flattened in the likeness of a seed vessel, and the large wings are exact imitations of a full-blown leaf, with all its veins and skeleton complete, and all its colour and apparent texture." In this case the purpose of the resemblance is more that of capturing other insects, than of direct self-preservation from insectivorous birds; the Mantis* being of a predacious nature, and armed with the most terrible hidden weapons. The insect sits apparently motionless on the leaf which it so closely resembles; but in reality it advances on its victim with a slow and insidious approach.

In that remarkable genus Phyllium (the leaf insect, or the walking-leaf), not only are "the wings perfect imitations of leaves in every detail, but the thorax and legs are flat, dilated, and leaf-like, so that when the living insect is resting among the foliage on which it feeds, the closest observation is

* From their habit of sitting with their forelegs held up together as in an attitude of prayer, these insects are held in reverence amongst the Hottentots, who actually worship them and canonise as a special favourite of Heaven any one on whom they happen to alight. There is a monkish legend which tells us that St. Francis Xavier seeing a Mantis moving along in its solemn and devotional way, desired it to sing the praises of God; whereupon the insect carolled forth a fine canticle. Mouffet informs us that, "so divine a creature is this esteemed, that if a childe aske the way to such a place, she will stretch out one of her feet and show him the right way, and seldom or never misse." Rösel, a practical entomologist, takes a very different view of their character. When several were confined together they fought desperately, their manœuvres very much resembling those of hussars fighting with sabres, the weapons being the forelegs. The females were generally victorious, and the battle usually terminated with a cannibal repast. The Chinese, aware of their pugnacious tendencies, keep them in little bamboo cages, and match them against each other.

often unable to distinguish between the animal and the vegetable." The genus Phasma (which includes the various species of "walking-stick" insects) is extremely imitative. Some species attain the length of a foot and the thickness of a man's finger, and in their colouring, form, rugosity, and the arrangement of the more projecting organs, are absolutely identical in appearance with the dead sticks which are found in abundance in the forests which these insects frequent. The Duke of Argyll refers to a specimen in the British Museum, in which the wings are covered with spots which exactly imitate the appearance of a larva-eaten leaf; and Mr. Wallace obtained one in Borneo which "was covered over with foliaceous excrescences of a clear olive-green colour, so as exactly to resemble a stick grown over by a creeping moss."

We have adduced, in the preceding pages, sufficient examples of the importance of colouring, and, in many cases, of form, as a protection to animals of almost every class. The protective agency varies, as we have seen, in degree, from the mere absence of conspicuous colour, as in Arctic and tropical animals, to such perfect resemblances to inorganic or vegetable structures, as to give its possessor the power of rendering itself invisible, as in the case of the Mantis, Phyllium, and Phasma.

We have now to consider how these wonderful resemblances have been accomplished, and here we prefer adopting the views of Mr. Wallace to those of any of the other naturalists who have taken part in this discussion. The first point that strikes us is the extreme rarity of white colouring in the mammals and birds of the temperate and tropical zones in a state of nature. Except in the Arctic and Alpine regions, where white is a protective colour, there is not a white land bird or quadruped in Europe; yet, as was mentioned in an early part of this article, many animals and birds (notably cats, rabbits, mice, fowls, and pigeons) when domesticated, and therefore removed from "the struggle for existence," almost immediately give origin to white varieties. In a state of nature white varieties occasionally present themselves; white blackbirds, starlings, and crows, for example, are not very rare, but their conspicuous colour soon renders them a prey to other animals, and the variety is not perpetuated. There is, indeed, no reason for supposing that white offspring are not as common in a state of nature as under domestication; but those whose colour is the fittest for their position in life will alone survive. On the other hand, if an animal spreads from a temperate into an Arctic district, the conditions are reversed, and the white varieties will have the advantage, while their brown companions will speedily succumb.

That slight amount of variation in every species which, if we observe at all, we are apt to regard as accidental and unworthy of notice is (to use the words of Mr. Wallace), "the foundation of all those wonderful and harmonious resemblances which play such an important part in the economy of nature." Rapid multiplication, incessant slight variation, continued for an almost unlimited period of time, and "survival of the fittest," are the laws which have produced all the cases of protective resemblances that have been noticed in these pages.

PLOGARRIAN.

IN SEVEN CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

The little town of Audierne is situated in the arrondissement of Quimper, which is the westernmost portion of the department of Finisterre, itself comprising the western part of the ancient province of Brittany, and, indeed, the land furthest west of all the realm of France, as its name, Finis terræ, is intended to indicate. Beyond that finis terræ, the great Atlantic rolls its waves against the rock-bound coast in an unbroken sweep.

Twenty years ago the town of Audierne was set down in the gazetteers and returns as possessing a population of one thousand souls. But any one of these thousand would have been much offended with any stranger, who should have styled their abode by any other appellation than that of ville, and the maps duly bore out their pretensions by the size of the letters used to indicate its position. Now, indeed, the number of its inhabitants has much increased. The sardine fishery, and especially the business of curing that popular fish, has assumed larger dimensions. A number of new houses, built in new lines of streets, cheap, mean, and ugly, have added to the statistical importance of the place, but have sadly impaired its old picturesque appearance.

Whether called town or village, Audierne was a very pretty spot twenty years ago. Nestling among thick trees by the side of its little stream, and just at the point where that stream swells to an estuary, which falls

into the wide bay of Audierne to the southwards, it unites in a special degree the beauties of inland and of coast scenery. The bay of Audierne is formed by a long, low-lying tract of well-wooded coast, receding in a perfect segment of a circle, between two remarkable and celebrated headlands, that of the Pointe du Raz to the northwards, and that of the Pointe de Penmarch to the southwards. The remarkable nature of these two headlands, stretching far out into the Atlantic, like huge buttresses destined to protect the land against the tremendous battering of the Western Ocean, is sufficient to strike the most careless eye. The coast rises in them to a vast height, and is composed of granite rocks of the boldest and wildest character. The light-house on the Pointe du Raz stands three hundred feet above the level of the sea, and in heavy weather the waves break over it. The celebrity of these two points is to be found in all the long series of Breton story, and song, and fable from the earliest days to the present time. The Pointe du Raz is the most western land of France, stretching much further in that direction into the Atlantic than the southern horn of the bay formed by the Pointe de Penmarch. And hence the climate of Audierne and its bay, protected from the north, is much softer and milder than that of other districts in its immediate neighbourhood.

At a little distance from the town of Audierne to the south-east, so as to be situated about a mile from the coast, on the gently sloping curve of the bay, facing a little to the west of south, stands the château of Plogarrian.

There, in their old ancestral château, dwelt, shortly after the beginning of this century, two brothers named De Kergonnec—Eugène and Gregoire. In contradiction to the more usual practice in French families, the elder, Eugène—the elder by little more than a year—had at an early age been sent away from home, while the younger, Gregoire, had passed his life almost entirely in Brittany, and mainly at Plogarrian. This reversal of the ordinary practice, however, had not been caused by any intention on the part of their father to depose his eldest son from his rights and position of heirship to the family possessions in favour of the younger, but by the dissimilar tastes and dispositions of the two boys. Eugène was frail and delicate of constitution, town-like in his tastes, and bookish in his habits. Gregoire, already at fourteen a head taller than his elder brother, was a young Hercules, utterly averse from all studious pursuits, who passed the greater portion of his life out of doors, in the forests, or on the coasts of his native province, and wished and cared for no other life. Both the brothers, therefore, were equally delighted when it was decided that Eugène should go to Paris to reside in the family of a physician, the brother-in-law of his father, where he could have the medical superintendence which his constitution rendered desirable, and could at the same time profit by the educational facilities of the capital, while Gregoire was to remain at home, and live the life that he loved. What was to be Gregoire's ultimate destination and lot in life does not seem to have been made the subject of much forethought.

The boys were about fourteen and fifteen when this arrangement was made; and matters continued at Plogarrian much as the arrangement left them for the next ten years. Letters came from time to time from Eugène, representing himself as improving in health, contented with the life he was leading, and prosecuting sundry branches of study with success. An occasional letter from the physician brother-in-law confirmed these accounts.

At Plogarrian, the ten years appeared to slip away without bringing with them many eventful changes. One change, indeed, had taken place within a year after Eugène's departure for Paris—his mother, Madame de Kergonnec, died. She had long been an invalid, and had not seemed to count for much in any way in the family. Nevertheless, as often may be observed in similar cases, her removal did make a difference, and left the way open, as one may say, for a state of things in the old château, which her continued life might have prevented, or at least modified. A certain disorder and looseness in the mode of life at the château, to use no stronger word, seemed gradually to be introduced; and these characteristics became more marked as the old man sunk gradually into imbecility, and Gregoire became a young man. The elder De Kergonnec had for several years, beginning probably from the time when his wife's health no longer enabled her to mix with the world, seen but little society save two or three neighbouring parish priests, the doctor, and the mayor of Audierne. But gradually the priests and the mayor left off frequenting the château. The young man could not be expected to live without society of any kind; and as the old man became more

and more incapable of governing, and his son became more and more master of himself and of the château, guests might very frequently be found there, who would have seemed of evil augury to any well-wisher to the family. It was not that the disordered life which has been spoken of was of a kind that affected the De Kergonnec finances. The old man was still capable of keeping the same tight hand over the purse-strings, that he had ever been wont to hold. Nor was reckless expenditure any characteristic of Gregoire de Kergonnec. He was too genuine a Breton for that! The occasional suppers and drinking bouts, which made merry times for his acquaintances of the woodland and the seaboard, were not costly in their nature.

The visits to the château of the neighbouring clergy and of the mayor of Audierne had gradually ceased, as has been said. But those of the doctor were continued, partly, no doubt, because the failing health of old De Kergonnec required them, but partly, also, as is probable, because Monsieur Corseul himself —that was the doctor's name—was not altogether free from tastes that made the life at the château not disagreeable to him. Nevertheless, there was reason for believing —at least the Audierne gossips thought so—that there was yet another motive which induced Monsieur Corseul to seek rather than to avoid the intimacy of young De Kergonnec. Corseul was a widower, with one very pretty portionless daughter. He was also a medical man, who had known Eugène de Kergonnec from his birth upwards; perhaps had known more of his life at Paris than anybody else at Plogarrian or at Audierne.

The gossips of Audierne, who were always engaged in that favourite pastime of "putting two and two together," as they called it, did put these facts together, and looked into each other's eyes with significant smiles, and said, "Ahem!" as they did so. There were some other facts, too, to be added by the careful collectors of such to the above list. Pretty Barbe Corseul had never been seen at the château, it is true. Under all the circumstances of the life and family there in those days, she could hardly have been so without loss of credit. But Gregoire de Kergonnec was very often to be seen at the door of the doctor's modest home in Audierne. And what was the attraction that drew him there? "Hein?"

The gossips, it may be said at once, were perfectly correct in the conclusions they drew from the above premises. Monsieur le Docteur Corseul had conceived the idea that, perhaps, in any case, at all events in the case, which he considered more or less likely, of Gregoire de Kergonnec inheriting the family property, that young man would be a very desirable match for his portionless daughter. The pretty Barbe was quite as ready, as a well-regulated French girl always is, to accede to her father's wishes and schemes in the matter. And Gregoire de Kergonnec, then about twenty-four years old, had been thoroughly fascinated by the smiles of by far the most lovely girl it had ever been his fortune to see.

Matters stood thus at Plogarrian and at Audierne, when, one fine morning, about ten years after the departure of Eugène de Kergonnec for Paris, there came a letter from him to his father, demanding in due form the old man's consent to his eldest son's marriage. The lady was stated to be a French West Indian, possessed of considerable property, as well as all sorts of other attractions and excellences. Another letter came also from the brother-in-law physician, fully confirming all that Eugène had written, and expressing his own complete approval of the match. Of course there was no reason for refusing the consent asked. It was very readily given, and the long absent heir was urged to bring his wife to the home of his fathers, before it should be too late for him to receive his father's blessing.

Very shortly after the arrival of this news, and the despatch of the answer to it, beautiful Barbe Corseul was sent to pay a long promised visit to an aunt at Brest; and the Audierne public began putting two and two together harder than ever, and finding very little difficulty in discovering what sum resulted from the process. People told each other that le père Corseul was a vieux malin, who, though he might be somewhat too devout a worshipper of la dive bouteille, knew perfectly well what he was about, and might be quite safely trusted to manage his own affairs.

Nevertheless, those who supposed, if any such there were, that Corseul had definitively abandoned all idea of seeing his pretty Barbe châtelaine of Plogarrian, did wrong to the doctor's Breton pertinacity. But it was necessary not to be too precipitate. All was not over. But assuredly the marriage of Eugène was a severe blow to his hopes; and, as it was likely enough

that Gregoire de Kergonnec might not take exactly the same view of the matter as his intended father-in-law, it was as well in the meanwhile and for the present that Barbe should be at a distance.

Very shortly, the marriage having been celebrated in due course at Paris, Eugène de Kergonnec brought his wife home, and the first sight of the married couple raised Corseul's hopes cent per cent. The young Madame de Kergonnec was very evidently an even yet frailer plant than her husband had been, and—to the shrewd and searching eye of old Corseul—yet was. She was very pretty; just one of those delicate and fragile creatures, who look as if transplantation from their own native sunny land to such a climate as that of Paris, to say nothing of the ruder air of Brittany, must be fatal to them. Then the change from all the carefully devised luxury of Paris to such a residence as the old château of Plogarrian, was not calculated to act favourably on the morale, any more than on the physique of the delicate young wife. All this Corseul carefully noticed, and pointed out to Gregoire de Kergonnec, while, at the same time, gradually opening his mind to the fact that, however great and desirable an honour it would be for him to give his daughter in marriage to a De Kergonnec of Plogarrian, it was by no means the same thing—indeed, could not in any way be reconciled to his notions of his duty as a father—to give her to any De Kergonnec who was not of Plogarrian.

Gregoire stormed, and was very violent, for he was not a patient or gentle man under any circumstances, or one at all accustomed to be baulked of that which he desired; and he had never desired anything one-tenth part so eagerly as he desired to have Barbe Corseul for his wife.

The doctor strove to quiet him by pointing out the many grounds for thinking that it was probable enough that his wish might yet be gratified. In truth, neither of the young married couple looked at all as if they were likely to stand very long in the way of anybody. Eugène de Kergonnec might, as Corseul observed, have seemed to improve in health while he was a growing lad. But all he could say was, that he did not look as if he had two months' life in him. While as for that poor scared-looking pale slip of a creature, with about as much backbone in her as a boiled asparagus——!

Eugène, too, seemed struck and shocked by the unfitness of the place to which he had brought his wife, to be the home of so delicately nurtured a creature. Partly, no doubt, his recollections of the old place had misled him. The home which had seemed not only delightful, but grand and stately to his boyish mind, and eyes which had never seen any other part of earth's surface than his native arrondissement, appeared in a very different light to the young man, a resident in Paris of ten years' standing. Much of his disappointment was due to this cause. But it was also true that the place itself was changed for the worse. It could not be said to be dilapidated; but all the air of well-ordered home comfort, which had not been wanting in his mother's time, was gone. The sordid mode of life, which had of late years prevailed at Plogarrian, seemed, by some of those magic influences, which certainly do impart an expression, and, as one may say, a physiognomy to the homes of men, to have vulgarised and changed the appearance of the place. What had seemed venerable in its simplicity had come to look mean and shabby. What had appeared home-like, now seemed to be slovenly and sordid.

The winds, too, surely were more bitter than they used to be ten years ago, and the fogs colder and more frequent! No! Plogarrian would never do for Lèontine, and after a decently long visit to his father, he would take her back again to Paris.

Corseul told him that it was an exceptional season; that the cold and the fogs were greater than usual. But he heard the short cough that had interrupted Eugène as he was speaking, and marked the shiver that ran through him, as he drew his cloak closer round his narrow shoulders, and felt a considerable assurance that the old Breton home would have a Breton mistress yet.

Eugène had fully made up his mind to get back to Paris as soon as he could. But his father had for some little time past been declining very perceptibly. And when the time came that he had fixed for his departure from Plogarrian, hoping to get away before the first storms of winter should beat upon that bleak coast, the old man was sinking so rapidly, that a regard for common decency made it impossible for his son to leave him till all should be over. Old De Kergonnec lingered yet a week or ten days, and then died. Of course it was necessary to wait for the funeral. And before that was over, Madame de Kergonnec was too unwell to be in a condition to travel.

Corseul, however, was not upon this

occasion as much reassured as to the value of his own hopes and his daughter's prospects as when he had first scanned Madame de Kergonnec with a professional eye. It was, indeed, quite manifest that she was in no condition to travel. But a very short interview with his patient sufficed to convince the doctor, that the cause of her present illness was likely to place a far more fatal obstacle between him and the realisation of his plans and hopes, than even her own life or that of her frail husband.

The young wife was enceinte, and if the child should be a boy—farewell to all hope of seeing his Barbe mistress of Plogarrian.

Gregoire de Kergonnec was not a pleasant man to look upon when Corseul, after having duly congratulated Eugène on the coming event, communicated the news to him. The black scowl that came like a thunder-cloud over his brow, and the hard set look of hatred and determination which seemed to harden his jaw and lip into the semblance of adamant, revealed the existence in his heart of a more dangerous class of passions than the doctor had ever credited him with.

Corseul's eye fell beneath the baleful expression of the young man's face; and he turned away to get himself out of the room as quickly as he might. But Gregoire, rudely taking the door from his hand, and violently closing it, while, putting his back against it, turned to face his companion, and said, grinding the words with slow and concentrated vehemence between the closed teeth of his powerful square jaw: "Mark this, doctor! I do not want to put an end to the life of anybody, not even to such puny good-for-nothing lives as those of Eugène and his sick ghost of a wife—not for the sake of house, or land, or money. But, mark you, I mean to have Barbe Corseul for my wife. If you did not mean me to have her, you should not have led me to hope it. Give her to me, and I shall be as harmless a man as any in Finisterre. But if you make my having her dependent on the lives of any of these people—look you to it! Il y aura des malheurs!"

"Pooh, pooh!" said Corseul: "don't talk in that manner. You don't mean it, and I won't listen to it. There, I must be going."

"Will you give me Barbe for my wife, whether or no?" said Gregoire, glaring on him.

"What, now—out of hand! Certainly not. You know, Monsieur Gregoire, how the matter stands. You know how anxious I am for an alliance that would be so great an honour to me—so desirable in every way. But we must have a little patience. Be reasonable. This child—bah! The child of such parents! It may be a girl. It may never be born alive at all," continued the doctor, advancing a step nearer to Gregoire and dropping his voice. "Who knows what may happen?"

"Look here, doctor," returned Gregoire, speaking in a low voice, and looking at Corseul, "between the eyes," as the French phrase is, "all these things are in your hands. You take care that this matter goes right, and all will be well. But if it does not—look out for trouble!"

Corseul understood right well what was passing in the mind of the man, who stood looking into his eyes with that baleful glare streaming out of his own, and he felt hot all over, and the blood rushed to his florid face as he listened to him.

"Tenez, Monsieur Gregoire!" he replied, looking back into the working face of the other with as fixed a glance as his own, "do not let us misunderstand one another. I am no puritan. Que diable! But, look you, I do not meddle with matters that—that the assize courts meddle with—you understand me! And, then, you see, I am medécin; oh! ma foi, medécin avant tout! If you wanted to propose to me a little affair down on the coast there, even though the lawyers might call it by ugly names—Je ne sais pas! But in the sick-room I am a doctor, and know nothing but that. Vous comprenez, n'est ce pas? But, what then, mon ami! As a doctor I tell you that there is every chance that things may arrange themselves as you wish. Have patience, and wait a little to see what will turn up."

"I will wait," said Gregoire, suddenly. "I will wait; but I will not be baulked. Mark that. Very well. I will wait; but I won't wait here. I am off for a day or two."

And with that he flung himself out of the room, leaving the doctor looking after him with an uneasy eye and a troubled mind.

It was nevertheless quite true that the doctor had no intention of purchasing the promotion of his daughter to be a lady of Plogarrian at the price of a crime. He was very far from a scrupulous man; he was not even scrupulous enough to be morally much shocked at the thought which had been in the mind of his proposed son-in-law. But it was true that he would have been more likely to consent to be guilty of any crime than such a one as that which

had been proposed to him; true that, once by a patient's bedside, he was avant tout medécin; and that poor Madame de Kergonnec would be as safe in his hands, as he could make her.

And I fancy that such a phase of moral feeling is not an uncommon one.

Gregoire de Kergonnec vanished from Plogarrian, as he said he would; and it afterwards appeared that he employed the time of his absence in making an unavowed visit to Brest. But it was not Mademoiselle Barbe who was guilty of the indiscretion of giving anybody information on the subject.

CHAPTER II.

The first of the consequences of Gregoire de Kergonnec's sudden departure from the château was, that he was not present at his father's funeral, an omission of duty which caused very considerable scandal in Audierne. Nobody knew where to find him or to look for him, when he ought to have accompanied his father's remains to the grave. But the world of Plogarrian and Audierne was not unprepared to expect any such behaviour from Gregoire de Kergonnec. It was just what might be expected from his habits and ways of life, people said. And only a very few of his special friends, or of those good Christians whose charity could think no ill, ventured hesitatingly to suggest, that in all probability the young man's grief made him incapable of decorously appearing in public. Naturally it was not altogether the same thing with Monsieur Eugène, who had been a stranger to his father and to his home for the last ten years.

At all events Monsieur Eugène did perform his duty to society upon this occasion. And the result of his doing so was that he caught a bad cold and cough at the funeral; broke a blood-vessel in the course of the same night, and was himself ready to take his place in the churchyard beside his father within twenty-four hours afterwards.

The terrible shock caused by this event to the delicate frame of the poor young wife, thus left alone in that dreary old château and wild country among strange people, resulted, as Corseul fully expected that it would, in a premature confinement. And though the doctor was as good as his word in his attention to her, the poor young mother died in giving birth to a seven months' child.

But the child was born alive!

And it was a boy!

On the evening of the day on which these events happened, Gregoire de Kergonnec returned from his solitary ramble, and entering the château unannounced, was met by the doctor in the parlour on the ground floor, which had in those days become the ordinary and sole living room of the house.

"Monsieur Gregoire! Have you seen nobody? Have you heard nothing?" said Corseul, with a feeling almost akin to fear, at having to tell the violent man the tidings he had to communicate.

"Seen—heard! No, I have seen nobody. Whom should I have seen? What is there to hear? I forgot, when I went away, that there would be the funeral of my father. I had my mind full of other things. Well, I could have done no good to anybody."

"No, no. I suppose not. Any way, you may repair the omission now. There are now two more funerals to be attended."

"Who? What? What do you mean? Why don't you speak out?"

"Your brother broke a blood-vessel and died at three o'clock this morning. His widow was prematurely confined, and died much about the same hour this afternoon. Is that speaking out?" said Corseul, doggedly.

Gregoire for an instant stood staring at the doctor, absolutely dumb with astonishment.

"What, both!" he said, after a minute's silence, while he and Corseul stood looking at each other; "both gone! both cleared out of the path, as though they had never been born. . . . Corseul——"

A searching look of inquiry, the purport of which the doctor well understood, stood in the place of any further words.

"I did my duty, as a medical man, to the utmost of my power," said Corseul, steadily. "Called to your brother in all haste when he broke a blood-vessel, I passed the night with him till he died. I was by the bedside of your sister-in-law from the time she was taken ill till she died. I do not believe that all the doctors in Paris could have saved their lives."

"So!" said Gregoire de Kergonnec, seating himself in a large arm-chair, which had been his father's usual seat, and still looking fixedly at the doctor, "So!" And then he paused, and continued to look hard at Corseul, who had taken his stand with his back to the wood fire burning on the old-fashioned hearth, and who spoke no word.

"Well!" continued Gregoire, after a minute or two. "Well! Have you nothing more to say? Why the devil don't you speak to me? Well?"

"Monsieur Gregoire, there is more to be told," said Corseul, uneasily. "Two have been removed — but one remains. Your sister-in-law has left a child—who lives!"

"A boy?" cried Gregoire, starting to his feet.

"It is a boy!" returned the doctor, slowly nodding his head.

It would be to no good purpose to offend the reader's ears by transcribing all the torrent of blasphemy and imprecations which Gregorie de Kergonnec hurled from his lips at this announcement. The doctor's ears were less susceptible; and he would have been content to let his hoped-for son-in-law's passion rave itself out, and to hear himself called again and again an imbecile, without either sense or courage, till the next morning, but that he seriously feared that Gregoire in the excess of his passion would perpetrate some act of violence, which would ruin everything. He felt convinced that if the new-born babe had at that minute been within reach of his hand, he would have dashed the frail life out of it.

He therefore set himself to appease the furious man's rage at his disappointment by representing to him over and over again the great improbability that the child could live; a seven-months' child; born of such a mother, under such circumstances!

"Does the brat seem life-like?" Gregoire was after awhile sufficiently calm to ask.

"Life-like! No! How should it? A poor, undersized, puling little wretch! Life-like! I should think not!"

Gregoire sat himself down again in the old arm-chair and remained silent, and apparently buried in thought for awhile. Then he said, suddenly lifting up his head, "I will wait then still awhile!"

"To be sure! to be sure! don't be in such a devil of a hurry!" said the doctor, trying to force a smile. "Only have a little patience, and all will come as we would have it, you may be very sure."

So Gregoire waited.

But poor Léontine's puling child did not die. Day after day, week after week, month after month, contrary to all expectation, it lived on. And the doctor had more and more difficulty in persuading Gregoire that if he would only wait a little longer, all would assuredly come right.

All this time Barbe had remained with her aunt, to the increase of her lover's savage ill-humour and impatience.

But about ten months after the birth of the heir to Plogarrian, Barbe was recalled by her father. And very shortly after she came home it was allowed to come to the ears of Gregoire, that a very desirable marriage had been proposed to her at Brest. A master shipwright, the owner of a yard, had placed himself and his fortune at her feet. Of course he had been refused! What did Monsieur Gregoire take his daughter for! But the shipwright would not accept his dismissal; and would no doubt bother poor Barbe again. Meantime, what could be done but wait yet a little longer!

It certainly did not seem as if the recal of Barbe by her father, and the communication of this story of the shipwright were well calculated to induce Gregoire de Kergonnec to submit quietly to the expectant policy, which the doctor was continually urging on him. Was it perhaps the fact that the doctor began about that time to lose faith in the policy of waiting? Was it the case that the young heir of Plogarrian was really getting stronger, and that the chances of his removal by death began to seem less in the medical eyes of the doctor; that he began to think that "waiting" would never make Barbe Corseul mistress of Plogarrian; and that while he still continued to urge Gregoire to "wait," he was not unwilling to let circumstances urge him to adopt a more active course? There are men who have no objection to profit by the crimes of others, though, even apart from the fear of the law, they are not prepared to dip their own hands in crime. The records from which this narrative is compiled do not in truth contain anything which can strictly justify such an accusation against Corseul. But—when people are anxious to keep a very violent man quiet, they do not put before his eyes exactly that which is most calculated to stimulate him to active violence. Possibly Dr. Corseul might have replied to any such observations, that it was true that his daughter had received the proposal in question: and that he judged it far better that Monsieur de Kergonnec should hear the fact from himself than, as he assuredly would otherwise do, from others. And all this might be very true. Still it would seem to have been hardly prudent to have selected that moment for the return of Mademoiselle Barbe to Audierne.

The result of her return home, or of this story of her new suitor, or of the but too evidently improving health of his infant nephew, or of all these things together, made itself visible within a few days after Barbe's arrival in the shape of an announce-

ment by Monsieur Gregoire to the doctor, that he was not satisfied with the care his nephew was receiving from the nurse that had been hired for that purpose in the village; that he had heard of a very respectable, and in every way suitable woman at Rennes, who had lost a child of her own, and who would be perfectly ready to take charge of his nephew; and that he intended himself, so anxious was he on the subject, to convey the child thither. The journey was one of only a few hours; and old Jeanne, who had lived in the château pretty well all her life, would go with him and carry the child.

Corseul looked steadily into Monsieur Gregoire's eyes, as the latter thus stated his purpose to him, and said:

"If you ask me my opinion as a medical man, Monsieur Gregoire——"

"But I do not!" interrupted Gregoire, peremptorily. "I do not want any opinion from you at all upon the subject. I can judge for myself in this matter."

"In that case, I express no opinion at all, either to you or to any one else," replied the doctor, speaking the last words in a specially significative manner. "You will do as you judge best, Monsieur Gregoire; and I will not doubt that the child will do very well."

The doctor was not quite as good as his word. He did express an opinion to sundry gossips of the place, to the effect that he, for his part, should have thought it better to leave the child where it was doing well; and, indeed, had endeavoured to bring Monsieur Gregoire to that way of thinking. But, que voulez-vous? Monsieur Gregoire was so anxious—so afraid that the child should not be reared; as indeed he, the doctor, had often warned him that, considering all things, it could hardly be expected that the poor little thing should live. But Monsieur Gregoire would not give ear to any such warnings. Likely enough he felt the truth of them, though he would not admit it; for no care was, in his eyes, good enough for the child. In such sort did Dr. Corseul expatiate on the step which Gregoire had told him he was determined to take, when speaking with the gossips of Audierne.

One morning Monsieur Gregoire and old Jeanne started for Rennes, taking the ten months' old baby with them. And on the next day it was known to all Audierne that they, Monsieur Gregoire and the old servant, had been very fortunate at Rennes; that they met the woman to whom the child was to be intrusted almost immediately on leaving their inn to go in search of her; that Monsieur Gregoire had, thereupon, said that the best way would be that she—the new nurse—should return with them to the inn, and there receive the infant from the hands of its temporary attendant; that the woman did so; and that she seemed to be a very respectable and motherly woman indeed. What her name was it had never occurred to old Jeanne to inquire.

Despite all this solicitude, however, it seemed that the child did not thrive under its new nurse of Rennes. Dr. Corseul remarked, that in truth the teething of the infant would be the terrible time of trial. And the result showed the extent of his knowledge and experience. For in about three months—during which Monsieur Gregoire had "waited" with exemplary patience, while nothing more had, during that time, been heard from the shipwright at Brest—news came to Plogarrian that the child was dead.

Monsieur Gregoire showed the letter in which the sad truth was told to his friend the doctor.

"There can be no doubt about it, that the child is dead?" said the doctor, uttering this somewhat strange remark, in a singularly significant tone, and with a yet more strangely significant look at the young man.

"There is no doubt! I tell you that the child is dead," said Monsieur Gregoire, returning the look steadily, and, as a bystander might have said, if such there had been—which there was not—almost threateningly.

The doctor, if he had any doubts upon the subject, might certainly have asked for some documentary proof of the fact—some certificate of burial, or such like. But he did not do so.

He did, however, consent to the betrothal of his lovely daughter to Monsieur de Kergonnec de Plogarrian, and in due course the marriage was celebrated.

Perhaps the Brest shipwright broke his heart on the occasion, for nothing more was heard of him.

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THE ROSE AND THE KEY.

CHAPTER XXXIV. MR. TINTERN HAS SOMETHING TO SAY.

MR. TINTERN arrived next day, and was fortunate enough to find Lady Vernon alone in the drawing-room.

He had some county business to tell her of, and some gossip to report; but there was still something palpably on his mind which he did not very well know how to express.

He stood up, and she thought he was going to take his leave; it was time he should; but he went to the window instead, and talked of the two gigantic chestnut-trees that overshadow the balustrade of the court, in a sentimental and affectionate vein, as remembering them from the earliest time he could remember anything; and he spoke of her father with great regard, affection, and veneration. And then he spoke of the friendship that had always existed between the Grange and Roydon Hall, and then he mentioned that most interesting family memorial, the "shield-room," with the quarterings of the Rose and the Key; of his right to quarter which, proving the early connexion of his family with the Vernons, he was prouder than of any other incident in their history. And having ended all this, he seemed to have still something more to say.

The lady's large grey eyes lighted on him with a cold inquiry. She was growing impatient. If he had anything to say, why did he not say it? Her look disconcerted him, and his light eyes went down before her dark gaze, as with an effort he said:

"I'm going to take my leave, Lady Vernon, and I don't know whether you will, by-and-bye, be vexed with me for having gone without mentioning a circumstance, which, however, I believe to be of absolutely no importance. But, you see, you have so often told me that you like, on all occasions, to be put in possession of facts, and that you insist so much on candour and frankness as the primary conditions of all friendship, and you have honoured me, more than once, with so large a measure of confidence, which has extremely flattered me, that even at a risk of appearing very impertinent, I had almost made up my mind to tell you what I have ascertained to be a general—very general—topic of—of interest among neighbours and people down here; but, on the whole, I should rather not, unless, indeed, you would command me, which I rather hope you will not."

"I shan't command you, certainly. I have no right even to press you; but if it concerns me, I should be very much obliged if you would let me know what it is."

"I'm sure you will forgive me, but feeling how much, in a matter of so much more delicacy, you have already honoured me with your confidence, I felt myself, you will understand, in a little difficulty."

"You need have none, Mr. Tintern, in speaking perfectly frankly to me. Pray say what it is."

"As you say so, I shall, of course."

And then, with all the tact and delicacy, and polite and oblique refinement, on which he piqued himself, Mr. Tintern did at length distinctly inform Lady Vernon that it was said that she meant to honour Captain Vivian with her hand.

"If people had some useful occupation of their own they would have less time to spare in settling other people's affairs. I shan't take the slightest notice of any such rumours. They don't amount even to that.

They are not rumours, but the mere speculations of two or three idle brains. I am forty-two"—she was really forty-three, but even for the force of her argument she would not forego that little inaccuracy—"and I have not married since my husband's death, twenty years ago nearly. It is a little odd, that one can't have a guest in one's house, without being made a topic for the coarse gossip of low people. I only wish I knew to whom I am obliged for taking this very gross liberty with my name. They should never enter the doors of Roydon again."

Mr. Tintern was a little frightened at the effect of his own temerity, for he had never seen Lady Vernon so angry before, and a quarrel with her was the last thing he would have provoked.

"I shall certainly contradict it," he hastened to say. "I shall take every occasion to do so."

"You may, or you may not. I shan't prevent you, and I shan't authorise you. I don't want it circulated or contradicted. I am totally indifferent about it."

"Of course—entirely; you must be—entirely indifferent. But you understand, although I didn't believe it, yet, as I was supposed to be a not unlikely person to hear anything so interesting, I thought you might not choose, as my sitting by and not being in a position to contradict it appeared to some people very like countenancing the—the gossip——"

"Pray understand me, Mr. Tintern. I don't the least care whether it is countenanced or contradicted. It does not interest me. I shan't, either directly or indirectly, take the smallest notice of it. I look on it simply as an impertinence."

"I hope, Lady Vernon, you don't suppose for a moment that I viewed it otherwise than as an impertinence. That was my real difficulty, and I felt it so much that I really doubted whether I should mention it. But, on the other hand, I think you will say that I should have been wanting in loyalty to the house of Vernon, if I had not given you the option of hearing, or of not hearing, as you might determine."

"I think, Mr. Tintern, you did no more than was friendly in the matter," said Lady Vernon, extending her hand, "and I am extremely obliged to you. As to the thing itself, we shan't talk of it any more."

Lady Vernon took an unusually cordial leave of that near neighbour and distant kinsman, who departed in good spirits, and well pleased with himself.

As he rode homeward, however, and conned over the conversation, he began to perceive with more distinctness that upon the main question Lady Vernon had left him quite as much in the dark as ever.

"But she could not express all that contempt and indignation if there was anything in the report, and she certainly would not have been so much obliged to me for repeating it to her."

But this reasoning did not so entirely reassure him as he fancied it ought.

Six words would have denied it, and set the matter at rest, and that short sentence had not been spoken.

He began to grow very uncomfortable.

If he had known what was occurring at that moment in the library at Roydon Hall, it would not have allayed his uneasiness.

In that room there is a very pretty buhl cabinet, with ormolu Cupids gambolling and flitting over its rich cornice. You would not suppose that this elegant shell contained within it a grimy iron safe. But on unlocking and throwing open the florid and many-coloured doors, the homely front of the black safe appears, proof against fire and burglars.

Lady Vernon unlocks a small bronze casket over the chimney-piece, and from it takes the big many-warded key of the safe. She applies it, and the doors swing open.

A treasury of parchment deeds discloses itself. She knows exactly where to place her hand on the one she wants. The organ of neatness and order is strong in her. She selects it from a sheaf of exactly similar ones. No ancient deeds, yellow and rusty with years. This is a milk-white parchment. Its blue stamp and silver foil look quite pretty in the corner. A short square deed, with scrivenry that looks black and fresh as if the ink were hardly dry upon it, and there are blanks left for names and dates. It is a deed as yet unexecuted. She takes it out, and lays it with its face downward on her desk, locks the safe and the cabinet, and restores the key to its casket over the mantelpiece.

The angry colour is still in Lady Vernon's cheeks as she slowly reads this deed, filling in, with careful penmanship, all the dates, and writing, in no less than four blank places at full length, the words, "Alexander Wyke Tintern, of the Grange, in the county of ——, Esquire."

Was Lady Vernon rewarding friendly Mr. Tintern, then and there, by a deed of appointment—for these have been prepared,

at her desire, by Mr. Coke—securing his succession, in certain contingencies, to a share in a princely reversion?

No. Alas! for the aspirations of the Grange, these little deeds, quite sufficient and irrevocable, are for the eternal cutting-off of the condemned.

All being ready now, Lady Vernon touches the bell, sends for her secretary, and having doubled back the deed so that the signing place only is disclosed, seals, signs, and delivers it in presence of her secretary, who little dreams that these few magical symbols are taking off the head of a neighbour, and laying his airy castle in the dust.

And now he has duly "witnessed" it, and Lady Vernon despatches it that evening, registered, with a letter enjoining the strictest secrecy, to Mr. Coke in London.

So good Mr. Tintern, if he knew but all, need trouble himself no further whether Lady Vernon or Maud marry, or pine and die singly; for go where it may, not one shilling of the great reversion can, by any chance or change, ever become his.

CHAPTER XXXV. CINDERELLA.

Captain Vivian was now very much better; he has lost the langnor of an invalid, and is rapidly recovering the strength and tints of health, and with them the air and looks of youth return.

The uneasiness of Mr. Tintern grew apace, for he heard authentic reports of the long walks which the handsome young captain used daily to take about the romantic grounds of Roydon with the beautiful lady of that ancient manor.

"The idea," he said to Mrs. Tintern, "of that old woman—she's forty-six, if she's an hour—marrying that military adventurer, not five-and-twenty, by Jove! Such infatuation!"

Old Tintern saw the captain one day fishing his trout-stream diligently, and pretending not to know him at that distance, he shouted, in arrogant tones, to the keeper: "Holloa! I say, Drattles, go down there, will you, quick, and see who the devil that is fishing my brook!"

The gamekeeper touched his hat, and ran down, and Mr. Tintern, from his point of observation, strode at a more leisurely pace, in a converging line, towards the offender.

He found Captain Vivian in parley with the keeper.

"Oh, Captain Vivian!" he exclaimed very naturally, "I had not an idea. I'm so glad to see you able to take a rod in your hand."

"Lady Vernon told me you were so good——"

"My dear sir, don't say a word. I begged of Lady Vernon to send you here, if you cared for trout fishing, and indeed all Roydon guests are welcome. I hope you have had some sport. You must come up and take luncheon with us. I ought not, indeed, to say I'm glad to see you so well, for I am afraid it is a sign we are to lose you very soon. You'll be joining your regiment, I suppose. Those big-wigs are so churlish about holidays. They forget they ever were young fellows themselves. Do come and have some luncheon."

This invitation, however, Captain Vivian very politely declined.

"You are going to the ball to-night—Wymering—eh?" inquired Mr. Tintern.

"Yes, I intend going; and your party are going, I suppose?" said the young man.

"Oh, yes, we always show there; and Lady Vernon, is she going?" pursued Mr. Tintern.

"No, Lady Vernon don't feel quite up to it."

"Sending him," thought Mr. Tintern, "to put people off their guard. Perhaps she doesn't wish them to criticise her looks and demeanour in presence of the aspiring captain."

"Dear me, I'm so sorry: she complains sometimes of a headache," said Mr. Tintern, affectionately. "By-the-bye, there's about a mile of very good pike fishing at the other side. The men are busy cleaning the ponds just now; but if you are here in three weeks' time——"

"No, I'm afraid I shan't, thank you very much."

"Well, we must make an effort, and say a fortnight; will that do?"

"A thousand thanks, but I'm afraid I have little more than a week."

"Oh! nonsense. I won't believe it," exclaimed Mr. Tintern very cheerfully.

"I'm awfully sorry," said Captain Vivian; "it is such a beautiful country, and so charming in every way. I could live here all my life with pleasure."

"I'm so glad to hear it has made so agreeable an impression. We may look to see you here again, I dare say, before long."

"You are very kind. I don't know anything yet with certainty about my movements; they depend upon so many things.

I've a note, by-the-bye, which I promised to leave at the Grange."

"As you won't come to the house, I'll take charge of it," said Mr. Tintern. "I see it is for my wife. I dare say about the ball. She's out; she'll not be home for some hours. I think I may venture to open it." He did, and glanced through it.

"Oh, yes, pray tell Miss Vernon, my wife will be only too delighted to meet her and Miss Medwyn in the cloak-room. We shall be there at exactly half-past ten. I hope that will answer Miss Vernon. My wife would write, but she has gone to Dallerton; but you will be so kind as to say Miss Vernon may look on it as quite settled."

So they parted very pleasantly; for Mr. Tintern, who was a shrewd man, had heard two or three things that cheered his heart in this little talk with Captain Vivian. He felt, indeed, in better spirits about Roydon and the probable continuance of Lady Vernon's widowhood than he had enjoyed for nearly a fortnight.

He had had losses lately. It would be too bad if everything were to go wrong.

If we could sum up the amount of the sins and sorrows of the human race, purely mental and unexpressed, for the most part, that result from contingent remainders, destructible reversions, and possible godsends and windfalls, the total would be possibly rather shocking.

The little old-fashioned town of Wymering is in a wonderful fuss this night. It is its great anniversary—its night of dissipation and glory. It is not only for the town a crisis and an event, but the country all round, with Wymering for a centre, feels the radiation and pulse of the excitement. For ten miles round almost every good county house sends in its carriage and horses and liveries, and for fifteen—ay, even twenty miles round—roll in occasional carriages with post-horses; and traps besides, of all sorts, come rattling into the High-street with young fellows in hilarious spirits, thinking of nothing but dances and flirtation; and sometimes of some one's pretty face, without which the ball would be dark, and the music lifeless.

The clock of the town-hall has struck nine, and the Roydon carriage and liveries stop at the door of the Old Hall Inn. Miss Max and Miss Vernon get down, and their two maids also.

Captain Vivian, with Captain Bamme, who has begged a seat to Wymering, are coming on later.

The ladies have run up-stairs to their rooms; the maids and boxes follow.

Miss Max cowers over the little bit of fire, that smoulders in the grate of the large room. Miss Vernon is looking from the window to the lights of the town-hall over the way, and up and down the High-street, in a glow of excitement, which, to a town young lady, after a season or two, would have been incomprehensible and amusing.

"Max, will you touch that bell? We must see Mr. Lomax."

The host of the Old Hall appears forthwith, in answer to the summons of his Roydon guests.

"Mr. Lomax," says Maud, as soon as he appears at the stair head, "you must give me an order for Miss Medwyn and her maid to go to the gallery of the town-hall. She wishes to see how the room looks."

Mr. Lomax makes his bow, and in the lobby writes the order, and gives it to Miss Vernon's maid.

A few minutes later Jones was spreading, with light and careful fingers upon the wide coverlet of the bed, the dress which had arrived only that morning from London.

In very marked contrast with this, and the splendours which Jones was preparing, including the diamond stars which were to flash from her dark brown hair, and were now strewn on the dressing-table, was the present costume of pretty Miss Vernon.

Before the glass she stood in the identical dark serge dress and little black hat, and the very boots and gloves, which she wore at Cardyllion. The beautiful face that looks out of the glass, smiled darkly in hers.

"Come, dear Max, here is the order. It is only a step across the street."

Jones and Maximilla's maid were fussing over gloves and satin boots, and fifty things, in the dressing-room.

"Didn't you say a quarter past nine in the gallery of the town-hall?" said Maud, looking still at her own pretty face in the glass.

"Yes, dear, and mind, Maud, this is the very last piece of masquerading I'll ever be led into; I don't care how you coax and flatter me. What an old fool I have been!"

With this protest, Miss Max shook her head with a smile, and lifting her hands she said:

"With this act I take leave of my follies for ever, remember. I really don't know

how it is you make such a fool of me, whenever you please; I don't understand how it is you have got such an unaccountable influence over me; I only know that there doesn't exist a person on earth for whom I would have perpetrated so many absurdities, and told so many fibs, and I say, once for all, that this is the very last time I'll ever be a Jack-pudding for any one, while I live."

Miss Maud was before the cheval-glass, so Maximilla had to betake herself to a mirror of more moderate dimensions, before which she made a few slight adjustments of her staid brown silk, and her bonnet, and her velvet cloak, and then turning to Maud, she exclaimed:

"Oh, my dear, are you really coming in that serge? You are such a figure."

"Now come, you say this is to be the last appearance of Cinderella in her work-a-day costume, and you must not interfere. You shall change all with a touch of your wand when the hour comes. But, in the mean time, I'm to be as shabby and threadbare as I please. Come, it's ten minutes past nine; I should like to be in the gallery before he comes. You told him not to be there a moment before the hour?"

"To be sure I did, poor fellow; and I don't know which, he or I, is the greater fool."

With these words Maximilla Medwyn led the way down the broad staircase, and the two ladies, side by side, tripped swiftly across the village street. Miss Max handed her order from Mr. Lomax to the woman who already kept guard at the door, through which they reached the flight of narrow stairs which communicated with the gallery.

They mounted quickly, and entered the gallery. At the opposite end of this really handsome room is a corresponding gallery allotted to the musicians, half a dozen of whom were already on the benches, in high chat, pulling about their music, and uncasing their instruments. A quart pot, from the Old Hall, and a frothy tumbler, stood in the ledge, showing that they were already disposed to make merry. The gas candelabra were but imperfectly lighted; workmen were walking up and down the long room, with light tread, in tenderness to the waxed floor, completing arrangements, while their employers bawled their orders from one end of the room to the other; one steward was already present, garrulous and fussy, whom Maud, with some alarm, recognised as young Mr. Hexton, of Hexton Hall. Devoutly she hoped he might not take it into his head to visit the galleries.

They were quite to themselves, she and Maximilla, except for a little knot of Wymering womankind, who were leaning over, at the other end of the gallery, far too much engrossed by their own conversation to take any notice of them.

As the moment approached, the question, "Will he come? will he come?" was repeating itself strangely at Maud's heart. The noise in the lower part of the building had subsided, having moved away to the refreshment and cloak-rooms, from which its hum was but faintly heard, and the confidential murmur of the party at the other end of the gallery, who were discussing dresses, which they have, no doubt, been making for this great occasion, was rather reassuring.

"I think I'm fast," said Miss Max, holding her watch to her ear. "I wish we had not told him not to come before the time; we should have found him waiting."

At that moment the bells from the old church steeple, scarcely a hundred yards away, chimed the quarter, and, like a spirit evoked by the summons, Mr. Marston opened the door of the gallery and came in.

Smiling, to cover his real agitation, he came quickly to Miss Max, who rose with a very kind alacrity to greet him.

"Was ever mortal more punctual? It is quite a virtue, now-a-days, being in time to meet a friend," she said, approvingly, as she gave him her hand.

"It is only too easy not to be late," he said, extending his hand in turn to the young lady in the dark serge, with glowing eyes, and a smile. "The difficulty is not to be too soon."

He came next Miss Maud, and seating himself beside her, took her hand again very gently, and said, very low, looking in her eyes, "It is so like a dream!"

A DESIRABLE TENANT.

A GENTEEL house in a neighbourhood as genteel, though not pretentious, furnished in a style suited to a gentleman's family—that was the modest end of my ambition. Every one said, "Nothing easier." I could suit myself to a hair—to a T—to a nicety. Go to Smallsheet and Adams, the most civil, obliging people in the world. Go to Philpot and Sneyd, "my own men, just mention my name, and they'll do anything

for you." I knew pretty well the translation of this selfish "just mention my name," which often accompanies the apparently disinterested recommendation of a tradesman's merits. But, still, I tried all these officials, beginning with Smallsheet and Adams, passing on to Philpot and Sneyd, and working steadily through Bolger and Co., and all the rest of them.

Has it ever been remarked what a peculiar decorum attends these officials; how beautifully clean and shining are their properties, furniture, &c.; how almost elegant their raiment, and cheerful their bearing? They are nearly always young men. They receive us with a friendly alacrity. I suspect they cultivate address and manner more than any other profession. One was quite "guardsmanlike" in his dress and bearing, and welcomed his friends in a sort of boudoir, after they had waited their turn. He seemed a sort of Vathek, and would propose dazzling properties, costly messuages situated in Grosvenor-gardens, and such places, though again and again reminded that the means of the desirable tenant could not compass such residences. In desperation he descended to a sort of hovel near St. John's Wood, only thirty pounds a year—might be made a nice thing of, with a little outlay. He seemed to know no medium between such extremes. He was scented, had a dark eye and glossy moustache, and an air as though he had countesses for clients. His system, however, did not seem to succeed, for when the desirable tenant came by in a month, the elegant agent had closed his office.

The D. T. was next assured that all he had to do was to put himself into the hands of Blather, and the thing was done. Was it possible that I (the D. T.) had not done so already? Blather was like an eminent counsel in enormous practice. The countesses' carriages waited at his door. As you stayed an hour or so in the outer office, waiting your turn—"far better," he said, "make an appointment"—you saw him come out and see to the door gentlemen, whom he addressed as "My lord!" From that luxurious apartment—the inner adytum or shrine—you heard his voice in rounded periods, were occasionally made aware of his political sentiments. You caught the words, "Gladstone," "Mundella," "Forster's bill," "Whig dodge," and the like, which seemed to convey either that those eminent persons were seeking desirable tenants, or had imported the tricks of political life into their dealings with him. However, when the desirable tenant's turn came, he was undeceived on this point, the conversation being really agreeable, and referring to all the promiscuous topics of the day, to the marked exclusion of business. I enjoyed the privilege of being favoured with a private view of the autograph signatures, monograms, coronets, &c., of various titled persons of the realm, communications which had arrived that morning. It is rarely that one finds a gentleman of such fluent powers. We ranged, as I have said, over innumerable topics, carefully avoiding the degrading subject for which I had come, and for which Mr. Blather had his raison d'être. The only way in which the subject was at all suffered to be introduced was subject to the distinguished patrons before alluded to, in whose movements in the house-taking direction this gentleman seemed to have an extraordinary interest. On this footing the desirable tenant could not of course intrude his own vulgar concerns, and more than satisfied with a vague declaration of Mr. Blather's that he would keep the matter before his mind, the D. T. departed.

Many curious studies of human character might be made in this department; some of these agents were careless, some cold, some warm, some eager. However, all filled up numbers of elaborate documents, which had quite the air of cheques. Well furnished with a whole sheaf of these documents, the desirable tenant set out as if into the bush country to seek houses.

Perhaps there is no task so dispiriting, as this of house-hunting. In hunting for other things there is a stimulating eagerness and excitement; but here there is nothing but a sense of utter blankness and hopelessness. Walking through the task is bad enough; but to proceed, attended by a crowded family, in a vehicle, jogging solemnly from street to street, according to the "list," the inspecting deputation mistaking sometimes, and always coming out to the detachment left in the carriage with faces on which is written plainly, "Won't do: of course not"—is really a useful discipline for the soul. When the desirable tenant and party are in the hall, crowding it while the order to view is taken in by a maid, and whispers are heard from within, a fresh and dismal blankness settles on the heart. We know that the crafty old schemers are hurriedly laying out details of deception; they have been taken by surprise, and it is a little embarrassing. We are harpies—the would-be tenants. As the proprietress comes out, we exchange

with her glances of distrust, and even of defiance. We are taken up-stairs, and go through the inspection sadly, and without hope. Somehow it appears that we know, that every house thus inspected will not do. If it be specially inviting and attractive, the furniture clean and bright, and we feel our heart yearning to it, it is certain that the rent demanded will make us stagger. On the other hand, with a noisome cave opening before us, dark cellars on the drawing-room floor, gloomy casemates for sleeping in, with curious dinnery vapours pervading all the mansion, we are seduced into hiring by some trifling rent. The freebooters who are in charge of these dens are, in themselves, alarming; they have a truculent manner, as who should say that the desirable tenant had committed himself so far, and, by giving so much trouble, was half pledged, as it were, to the transaction. I have no doubt tenements of this description are often thus let by intimidation.

Some of the scenes witnessed during this investigation were dramatic in their way. There was the eminently desirable investment near Wilton-crescent — everything in the house-taking or house-letting direction is "desirable"—which was "dirt cheap" at one thousand pounds premium, and one hundred and fifty pounds per annum. The locality was aristocratic, and letters could be directed "handsomely" to "P. D. Tenant, Esq., So-and-So, Wilton-crescent." Still, for such an outlay, there was an air of "squeeze." The hall was as a little tunnel. But, subject to these narrow conditions, there was an elegant air about the tenement, even in spite of the stair, which was like a ladder leading to a loft. A distinguished-looking menial, powdered, led the way. He assumed that the desirable tenant was a visitor, at least he would not see him in the other light. He threw open the drawing-room door, announced him by his name, and threw the rest of the degrading office on those whom it most concerned. He made some remark about "a passon," and retired. This was what I saw as I entered. A richly dressed lady, good-looking, and with two or three children about her, was at the fire, busy, I think, with some department of their toilet. A maid aide-de-camp was in attendance. The room seemed handsome, with a great deal of velvet and gilt "nobbing." I never shall forget the haughty and angry stare she gave me.

"What do you want?" she said. "What is this?"

The D. T. faltered out some gentle explanation, at the same time tendering the order which Mr. Blather, or some one else, had drawn in his favour.

"Oh, this is Mr. Wilkinson's doings," the haughty lady said, turning to her attendant, her eyes flashing and her cheeks flushing. "It is intolerable. The house, sir, is *not* to be let. I shall not give my consent to it. It's quite a mistake—I shall not stir out of it."

Rather bewildered, the desirable tenant, seeing himself quite undesirable, protested he would not wish to be the cause of such discordant views between the two persons most concerned, and withdrew hurriedly, the lady rustling her stiff silk, fuming, and darting fierce looks at an imaginary Mr. Wilkinson. There was a whole story behind that significant little episode.

Some of the most curious features in these visits was the surprise, as the servant rashly showed you into the midst of some highly domestic scene; an entire family at lunch, for instance, a very fat leg of mutton steaming on the board, black bottles, sentry-wise scattered up and down the table. The resentful looks at being thus surprised were indescribable; the family indignation, strange to say, passing entirely over their own menial, whose fault it was, and settling on the D. T. I recal another awkward intrusion, where a pale sickly lady was discovered, with a bearded man on his knees before her, who rose and asked angrily "What I wanted there?" To enter into explanation that "you came to see the house," appeared too absurd—the best thing to do was to withdraw abruptly. A good-natured but untidy maid-of-all-work explained confidentially "that it was Mr. and Mrs. Littlejohn, who had at last come together, and Miss Mew had put them in the front parlour for the day." I felt that a mansion hallowed by such a sacred reconciliation was not to be lightly profaned, so I took my way hurriedly from the place.

"What would you say," said an agent, confidentially, "to a house in Grosvenor-square, at one hundred and twenty pounds a year and no premium?" I could only reply that in such a case speech would be silvern, but that securing it on the spot would be golden. But was there no mistake? An order to view was immediately drawn, and I drove up to No. 00 A, a really palatial building at the corner, with innumerable stories, portico, &c. Received with some loftiness by two menials, I said it must be a mistake, when one of them remembered

that there was something of the kind floating in the mind of the family. It was down the street though, round the corner. This dashed all my hopes, the truth being that the tenement to be let was a sort of annexe to the greater one. Still it looked desirable and imposing in its way, and it was legally No. 00 A; letters could be addressed there. But, on entering, the arrangement seemed the oddest in the world. There was no "back," and the whole establishment was lit by what is called "borrowed" light. Through the area rails there appeared to be a noble kitchen, with a vast range, but this proved to belong to the greater mansion, the kitchen proper being a little cupboard, off another little cupboard, known as the hall. Living in Grosvenor-square, or rather having the name of living there, seemed to be too dearly purchased on such conditions.

My last adventure was in this wise. With infinite perseverance, what suited in all points seemed at last to have been found—a real "beejew 'ouse," as one called it, or "b'jew" according to another, cheap, elegant, in the choice grounds of Mayfair. There was a stable and public-house opposite, but in Mayfair such things do not go for much. It was just the thing. But as the D. T., suspicious on all occasions, hurriedly opened the door leading to the lower regions, there issued from that darksome pit a gale of so awful a character—one on which you could have hung not only your hat but your great-coat, filling hall, stairs, the whole house—that the D. T. turned and fled.

THE CHEESE.

Once upon a time there was a cheese made in England, if not "larger than the largest size," at least of vast magnitude; it was a magnum. There is more than mere size in such an achievement. A coat for Daniel Lambert contained more cloth and more stitches than one for General Tom Thumb, but the same kind of skill was required in both. Not so in regard to cheese, a peculiarly capricious article of manufacture. To this day it is not clearly known, why the cheese made in Cheshire differs so much from that made in other counties; the Cheshire folks are glad that it does so, because a good price is thereby always obtainable; but dairy-farmers do not agree in their explanation of the causes. The milk, we are told, has the curd separated from the whey by means of rennet; the curd is repeatedly broken and strained; the cheeses are much pressed, and are placed in wooden boxes which have numerous holes bored in them; through these holes sharp skewers are stuck into the cheese in every direction, so as to drain out every particle of whey. Unless the whole cheese becomes a solid mass without any admixture of whey, it will never earn the name and fame of "prime Cheshire." This is one reason why cheeses of exceptionally large dimensions are so difficult to make; the trouble of getting out the whey is almost insurmountable, while its presence is obnoxious. The dairy-maids must be healthy and tidy as well as expert; for until all the modifications of milk into cream, curd, and whey are completed, very slight changes in the atmosphere and condition of the dairy, may bring about important and injurious results. It is known that Cheshire dairy-maids are sought for in other districts, in a belief that the excellence of the cheese depends much upon them. Fuller, in his Worthies, adverts to this, at the same time qualifying it with a proviso: "Cheshire doth afforde the best cheese for quantitie and qualitie; and yet the cows are not, as in other shires, housed in the winter. Some essaied in vaine to make the like in other places, thoughe they fetched their kine and dairie-maides: it seems they shoulde have fetched their grounde too, wherein is surelie some occult excellencie in this kind, or else so goode cheese will not be made." All good rich cheese contains some cream; insomuch that if the whole of the cream be removed from the milk before the making begins, a hard, dry, whey cheese is the result. In Suffolk, for example, where beautiful butter is made, the dairy-farmers like to appropriate nearly all their cream to this purpose: hence the cheese of that county has become a standing joke for hardness, toughness, and poor quality. We are told that Suffolk cheese will "turn the edge" of a hatchet or cleaver; and a man who had an extraordinary taste for eating stones, glass, and broken crockery is said to have declared that the only time he suffered indigestion was after he had eaten a bit of Suffolk cheese. Even the gentle Bloomfield made merry about the skim-milk and its produce:

Its name derision and reproach pursue,
And strangers tell of "three times skimm'd sky blue."
To cheese converted, what can be its boast?
What, but the common virtues of a post!
If drought o'ertake it faster than the knife,
Most fair it bids for stubborn length of life;

And, like the oaken shelf whereon 'tis laid,
Mocks the weak efforts of the bending blade;
Or in the hog-trough rests in perfect spite,
Too big to swallow, and too hard to bite.

Besides the English giant, presently to be noticed, there was a leviathan, a mighty one, made in America in the early part of the present century. A most memorable and national cheese. Its story has been told by Elihu Burritt, with all the enthusiasm naturally associated with patriotic feeling; but the plain facts are nearly as follows. There are several towns named Cheshire in the United States, two of which, in Massachusetts and Connecticut respectively, imitate the Cheshire of the old country by making cheese. Quite early in the century, there was a struggle in the United States as to the form which the government should permanently assume, John Adams advocating one variety of Federalism, Thomas Jefferson another. John Leland, a Puritan elder of Cheshire town, in Massachusetts, threw himself heart and soul into the controversy; in sermons and speeches and conversations he took Jefferson's side in the question, and brought over the whole of the townsmen to his way of thinking. When Jefferson was elected to the presidency, Leland proposed that they should celebrate the event by making and presenting to him a cheese such as the world never before saw. He advised, that, on a certain day, all the curd from one day's milk of all the cows in Cheshire township should be brought, as a patriotic contribution to the object in view. The inhabitants entered joyously into the scheme. All, men and women, boys and girls, who had the ownership or keeping of cows, brought their quota of milk or curd to a particular spot. A large cider-press had been thoroughly cleaned out, a new false-bottom provided, and a monster hoop laid down on it, corresponding in dimensions with the thickness and diameter of the intended cheese. When the accumulated gifts of curd were thrown in, skilled dairy-matrons mixed, flavoured, and tinted it. Then came the pressing; immense work, seeing that so thick a cheese could not possibly be of good quality throughout unless the pressure on the curd were much beyond the usual degree. Sturdy men, with arms bare and muscles well braced, turned the screw press until it would not yield another fraction of an inch. Then, Leland standing in the centre, and the people being grouped around him, all sang a hymn, and dedicated the cheese to Thomas Jefferson, the new President of the Great Republic.

After a due period for settling and drying, arrangements were made for carrying the mighty cheese to Washington, the Federal capital; and as the distance was not less than five hundred miles, the enterprise was certainly a formidable one. The weight—some say fourteen hundred and fifty pounds, some sixteen hundred pounds (twenty times that of a full-sized English Cheshire cheese)—could not safely be trusted upon wheels, with such roads as America then possessed. A snowy season was selected, a sledge was provided, the cheese was launched, and Master John Leland piloted it all the way to Washington. He was three weeks on the journey, and, wherever he rested at night, received quite an ovation, for the nature of his errand had become rumoured about. Arrived at Washington, he went to the White House, where, on an appointed day, he was received by President Jefferson and all the officials, with a goodly number of ambassadors and other folks. Leland presented the cheese to Jefferson in the name of the whole of the inhabitants of Cheshire; every family and every cow had contributed towards it. The president of course said what was proper on so remarkable an occasion. He caused a great wedge to be cut from the cheese and conveyed back to Cheshire, that the townsmen might have the pleasure of tasting the result of their labours; while all the guests at the White House, there and then, partook of the gift. The interior of the cheese was found of a beautiful colour, richly tinted with anatto; it was a little variegated in appearance, owing to so many dairies having contributed the milk or curd, but the flavour was pronounced to be the best ever tasted at Washington.

And now for the English cheese, big in its bigness, although its Transatlantic precursor was bigger. Moreover, the English magnate had humiliating scenes to pass through, enough to fret the curd of any cheese. Those readers who have at hand the whole series of the present periodical, will find full details of the history of this cheese in one of the early volumes;* to those who are not so provided, a brief summary may be acceptable. Early in the present Queen's reign, the farmers and yeomanry of West Pennard, near Glastonbury, resolved to present Her Majesty with a cheese such as England had never before seen. West Pennard is in or near the famous Vale of Cheddar; and the

* See ALL THE YEAR ROUND, First Series, vol. iii., p. 19.

Somersetshire cows could be relied upon for supplying milk of proper quality. On a given day the dairy-maids collected the milk of seven hundred and thirty-seven cows, "one meal's milking," as it is called in those parts, from each cow. All the cows in the parish contributed, the aggregate quantity being upwards of twenty hogsheads. About fifty wives and daughters of the dairy-farmers gladly took part in the work. Everything had previously been got ready—pails, tubs, vat, mould, press, cloths, &c., at the house of one of the farmers; and, although not without many difficulties, the cheese was made. Unlike most other specimens of this art, it was octagonal in shape; the diameter was about thirty-six inches, the circumference a little more than nine feet, the depth twenty-two inches, the weight eleven hundredweight. Twenty hogsheads may seem an enormous quantity to form this size and weight, but we must remember that the hogsheads represented the whole of the milk, whey and all; whereas the cheese was made of curd and cream only. The interior of the mahogany mould was so far carved as to give ornamental devices to the cheese. The upper surface displayed the royal arms, surrounded with a wreath of oak-leaves, and graced with the rose, thistle, and shamrock. The cheese, of course, required a long time to solidify properly; and during a portion of this time it was exhibited to strangers at a shilling a head. After many months (though, as it appeared, not months enough) the cheese was duly conveyed to London by a deputation of four West Pennard men. The Queen and Prince Albert received them very graciously; but as the cheese was evidently too new to cut, Her Majesty proposed that the villagers should take it back again, and keep it till it ripened, at which happy time she would present a hundred guineas to the poor of the parish. But jealousy sprang up at West Pennard; the farmers felt certain that knighthood, or some other great honour, would be conferred on those who finally presented the cheese. The cheese was actually besieged, and was defended with an iron cage and strong window bars. The belligerents on one side made a plaster cast of the cheese, and sent it up to London for exhibition; the belligerents on the other side obtained Her Majesty's permission to exhibit the real cheese itself at the Egyptian Hall; and the Court of Chancery had to settle the matter. The cheese was next exhibited in various parts of Somerset, but under such circumstances, that both the cheese party, and the plaster-of-paris party, lost a good deal of money by it. The Queen never again saw the cheese. It passed from one custodian to another; and at length it was cut, tasted, and found to be a very poor affair, more fitted for pigs than for royalty.

Let us flavour our big cheeses with a bit of folk-lore. In the rural districts there are many odd old customs and sayings relating to cheese, the real origin of which it would be no easy matter to ferret out. In regard to butter, the wise saws and sayings are still more numerous, partly owing to the fact, that the proper turning of milk into butter is a still more delicate affair than the proper coagulation of curd and cream into cheese. If the cow is bewitched, or the milkpail, or the churn, or the dairy-maid, woe be to the butter; and in the days when witchcraft was more believed in than it is at present, such dark doings at the dairy were the burden of many a strange story. Some curious examples were given in a former sheet of this work,* tending to show that the belief in witchcraft, even in this nineteenth century, has not yet disappeared, and that some of its strangest freaks—or rather freaks springing out of a belief in it—have had relation to dairy operations. Among old customs relating to cheese, one must have originated from some cause which it would now be impossible to trace. A cheese is made when a new inhabitant of the village is expected shortly to come into the world. The birth being safely over, if the new comer be a boy, the cheese is cut up and distributed to all the males in the village; if a girl, to all the inhabitants of both sexes.

One of the most remarkable bits of folk-lore, dependent partly on etymology for its solution, has been rather fully discussed in that excellent periodical, Notes and Queries. It relates not to cheese per se, but to a street saying, a bit of slang. The talker does not talk about cheese itself, yet he brings in the name of that comestible. A few years ago, a correspondent of the periodical above mentioned propounded a question as to the origin of a saying which was not much known in quiet households, but was tolerably familiar in places where "men do mostly congregate," especially young men. The saying or phrase is, "That's the cheese!" Some bright geniuses, anxious to advance a stage beyond their fellows,

* See All The Year Round, New Series, vol. ii., p. 541.

vary the form to, "That's the Cheshire!" or, "That's the Stilton!" but with the caseous basis understood. Now it would not be a very wild supposition that, on some particular occasion, a cheese of exceptional goodness was made, and became a sort of type, symbol, synonym, or representative of excellence generally, in noncheesy as well as in cheesy matters. But this would not do for those who love to dip and dive into the origin of things; the word "cheese" was analysed in all sorts of ways, and was made to bear relation to things which no Cheshire farmer, no tidy dairy-maid, no retailer of slang sayings, ever for a moment dreamed of. The answers obtained to the query are really worthy of notice; for, whether they are right or wrong, or half right and half wrong, or wrong with a little bit of right interposed, they mostly came from men of education and knowledge of languages. One respondent points to the fact that the word "choice" was formerly written "chose" and "chese." In the Vision of Piers Plowman, a satirical poem, written by a secular priest, named Robert Longlande, more than five hundred years ago, occur the lines:

> Now thou might chese
> How thou covetist to cal me,
> Now thou knowest al mi names!

And it is urged that "That's the chese," "That's the sort of thing I would choose," would have been considered by Robert Longlande as very good Saxon English. Another informant states that Ireland is the birthplace of the phrase. There was one David Rees, a comedian at Dublin, a very smart fellow at bon-mot and repartee, who, when playing in a piece called the Evil Eye, used the words "That's the cheese," which he repeated more than once. The audience, struck with the oddity of the phrase, relished it as the piece went on, and it became quite in favour as a comical bit of innocent slang—used when a person wanted to impress on another that something important had been said or done in reference to something in hand. Rees, at a subsequent period, was asked how he came to invent or devise the phrase. He replied that on one occasion a half-witted boy ate a piece of soap, and then told his grandmother what a nice piece of cheese he had devoured. "It was soap!" said the old lady. "Oh, no," replied he, "that's the cheese!" A third correspondent also names Ireland as the land of the invention, and only slightly changes the dramatis personæ and the circumstances. In the north of Ireland lived an old woman with a grandson about eight years old, who had a very undiscriminating appetite. The grandmother one day purchased a piece of yellow soap, and placed it on the window-ledge. Some hours afterwards, when about to commence washing, she said, "Paddy, where's the soap?" "What soap?" asked the boy. "Why, the soap that was in the window." "Oh, granny," he replied, "that was the cheese!" He had eaten it. The story was made a standing joke against Paddy for years afterwards; and it grew into use, as applied to anything which suited the taste of the person making use of the expression. A fourth contributor to the process of elucidation will not adopt either England or Ireland as the birthplace of the saying, but seeks for it in France. "C'est la chose," "That's the thing," seems to him quite natural enough as the beginning; not less so than "C'est l'etiquette" as the origin of "That's the ticket."

But the Hindoo parentage of the phrase is the most curious of all that have been suggested—the one which has the greatest number of defenders. A gentleman, lately returned from India, starts the subject by referring to a word pronounced "chiz," very commonly used in Bengalee, spoken in Calcutta, in the sense of "thing." A phrase, "That's the chiz," would be exactly equivalent to "That's the thing," "That's the thing for me." "It is easy to see how, in its transit to this country by means of the P. and O. Company, 'chiz' became 'cheese;' and hence our slang phrase." This statement has been confirmed by others, except that some call "chiz" a Hindoostanee, and others a Bengalee word; but this is merely a difference of provincial dialect. Attention has been called to a passage in Stray Leaves from the Diary of an Indian Officer, in which he says: "Few who use the word 'cheez' are aware of its exact meaning. It is simply the Hindoostanee word for 'thing.' In my young days we used to say that so-and-so was 'just the thing,' whereas we now say that it is 'just the cheez.'" One conjecture is, that the gipsies, who seem to have had some mysterious connexion with India in past ages, have brought the word from that remote country to England, and that it forms part of their lingo; while another conjecture would rest satisfied with the transplanting of the phrase, from the East to the West, by Anglo-Indians and military on their return home.

We cannot pretend to decide, but this Hindoo theory strikes us as being the best of all. If it is the right one, so much the more dignity to our cheese.

CHASTENED.

My soul was stricken on a summer day
With sudden sickness in her bloom and pride,
And through the length of all that year she lay,
Feeble, sore-smitten, trusting to have died.
She rose not up to see the reapers pass,
To lay their sickles in the yellow wheat;
Nor did she move when winter trod the grass
And flowers, to nothingness with icy feet.
But when the spring-time ruled the land again,
Mysterious yearnings in my spirit woke,
New energies endowed her heart and brain,
And she essayed to break her sorrow's yoke,
And said to it, "Thy rule is my disgrace,
I have been blind, now will I see thy face."

Then rose the grief that long had ruled my soul,
And these two struggled for the mastery;
But God had made my spirit's vision whole,
While grief was veiled, and might not plainly see.
Then sprang my spirit conquering and free,
To draw the veil from off the dreaded face,
And lo! the face was marvellous to see,
Divine: an angel's; full of awful grace.
"God sent me," said the angel, "unto thee,
A chastening rod, for loving kindness sake,
And if thou choose to hold me, I will be
A staff for leaning when all others break."
"I take thee," said my soul. "Of no true worth
Is life without thee. Walk with me henceforth."

SIEGES OF LONDON.

According to Fitzstephen, a chronicler of the twelfth century (Henry the Second), London was then girt by a high and thick wall, having seven double gates, and at intervals, on the north side, many towers. These seven gates were, it is conjectured, Aldgate, Ludgate, Newgate, Aldersgate, Cripplegate, Bishopsgate, and a postern near the Tower. The southern walls and towers were undermined by the river. In 1707, Dr. Woodward, a learned professor of Gresham College, examined the foundation of part of the old Roman wall, at the Bishopsgate end of Camomile-street. It was built of alternate layers of broad, flat bricks and ragstone, nine feet thick. The rampart had originally been twenty-seven feet high. In Maitland's time (1753) there were still traces of fifteen towers of the old London wall. Woodward describes one of these towers, twenty-six feet high, nearly opposite Gravel-lane, Houndsditch. It was still inhabited, but rent from the top to the bottom. In a street called the Vineyard, behind the Minories, there was the basis of another, the top of which had fallen in in 1651. There was also a considerable portion of the old Roman wall visible on both sides of Moorgate; and Mr. Craik, in Knight's London, says that much of this remained till the pulling down of old Bethlehem in 1818. The line of circumvallation can still be traced here and there. Postern-row, near the Tower, marks the site of the old Postern Gate, which Bishop Longchamp, in Richard the First's reign, detached from part of the old wall, and which fell in the reign of Henry the Sixth.

In 1841, Mr. Craik describes seeing a bit of the old wall between the north side of George-street and Trinity-square. This fragment was forty feet long and some twenty-five feet high. There was another bit at the back of a hemp warehouse near the north-east angle of Trinity-square. Another part of the old Roman foundation was discovered behind the south-west corner of America-square in extending the Blackwall Railway. From there, says the same antiquary, to Aldgate High-street, it ran between Houndsditch and Duke-street, Bevis Marks, and Camomile-street, to Bishopsgate-street. By Wormwood-street it passed to London-Wall by Sion College. The old wall forms the southern boundary of Cripplegate churchyard. It then turned south at the back of Barber's Hall, across Aldersgate, behind Bull and Mouth-street. It went behind Christ's Hospital, and struck down upon Newgate-street, which it crossed "a little to the east of its present termination at the Old Bailey." Ludgate stood immediately to the west of St. Martin's Church. It then turned west by St. Martin's-court till it reached the bank of the Fleet. Till 1276, the wall went straight from Newgate to the river, but part of it being pulled down to make room for the new house of the Black Friars, Edward the First ordered the City to build a new wall, running further west, to take in the whole precinct of the Black Friars. The first Roman wall probably ended east of St. Paul's, leaving that churchyard outside the City, as was the Roman custom.

In Alfred's reign the Norsemen occupied London. After nine pitched battles in one year, Alfred delivered Wessex for a time, and the Danes retreated to London; and in 861, Alfred, getting nearer and nearer to the pirates, soon regained London, which, says Mr. Freeman, "became henceforth one of the firmest strongholds of English freedom, and one of the most efficient bulwarks of the realm." In the reign of Ethelred, Olaf, King of the Norwegians, and Sweyn, King of the Danes, sailed up the Thames with ninety-four ships, and besieged Lon-

don. The chronicler says, "The mother of God, of her mild-heartedness," saved London that day from the fair-haired barbarians. They assailed the wall and the Tower of Alfred, and tried to burn the City, but were defeated with slaughter, and the two kings dropped down the river sullenly, not liking the reception we gave them, then spread, burning and murdering through Kent, and Essex, and Sussex, and at Southampton were bought off for sixteen thousand pounds. Soon after, the Danes, under Thurkill, again threatened London, but were repeatedly beaten off by the brave citizens. The rough visitors, then in a rage, crossed the Chiltern Hills, burnt Oxford, and then plundered both sides of the Thames.

In 994, Sweyn, another of these hungry Norsemen, attacked London; but this time Thurkill defended the City for King Ethelred, and Sweyn, who afterwards conquered nearly all England, was repulsed, losing many of his men in the Thames. But London's great siege was in May, 1016, when Canute beleaguered it. Sailing up from Greenwich, London Bridge stopped his progress, upon which patient and crafty Canute dug a deep canal to the south of the river, and got round to the west of the City. He then dug another canal round that part of the City which was not washed by the Thames, so that London was again hemmed in on all sides. But Canute had to raise the siege to give battle to King Edmund in Somersetshire. Finally, Edmund defeated the Danes at Brentford, and saved London. Three times Canute and the Danes unsuccessfully besieged the brave City.

After that terrible battle on the hill at Senlac, as Mr. Freeman persists in calling Hastings, William, insatiable for conquest, after a month's rest near Canterbury, marched on London. The great battle was fought on October the 14th. On December the 1st, William, then master of Dover, Canterbury, and Winchester, set out along the Old Kent-road, ravaging, burning, slaughtering, and requisitioning as he went. One chronicler says he occupied Westminster, and planted his catapults ready for the siege close to St. Peter's Minster. But this was not so. He, however, sent before his vanguard five hundred knights to reconnoitre in Southwark. The citizens sallied forth, and were beaten back within their walls, and Southwark, the southern suburb of England's capital, where Earl Godwin had once dwelt, was given to the flames by the Normans. But William did not yet venture on the City. He marched through Surrey, Hampshire, and Berkshire, and crossed to the left bank of the Thames at Wallingford. He pushed on then to Berkhempstead, in Hertfordshire, in order to surround London with a black ring of barrenness and desolation. At last London yielded. Its defender, the wounded Staller Esegar, the sheriff of the middle Saxons, sent ambassadors to Berkhempstead to treat with William, and to offer him the crown he had, in fact, already won. The conqueror, accepting the crown, sent soldiers before him to commence that fortress, probably at first of wood, which afterwards grew into the Tower of London.

In the civil wars of Henry the Third's time, London pronounced for Simon de Montfort. In London he held that first parliament to which the Commons were admitted, and which did so much to establish a basis for future liberties. When the earl fell at Evesham, with one hundred and sixty of his knights, Fitz-Richard, the mayor of London, at first threatened resistance, but he surrendered before the king's troops could formally besiege the place.

In the reign of Edward the Second, London had another narrow escape of a siege. In 1326, when Queen Isabella landed at Dover to free England from the tyranny of the Spensers, the favourites of the weak king, the Bishop of Exeter demanded the City keys of the lord mayor, and would have held London for the king, but the populace seized the keys, and running to Exeter House, fired the gates and burnt all the plate, jewellery, and furniture. The bishop, riding straight to the northern door of St. Paul's to take sanctuary, they beat him off his horse, dragged him to Cheapside, and, lopping off his head, set it on a pole. The corpse they threw, without funeral service, into a hole in the old churchyard of the Pied Friars.

Under the head of sieges, it is right to include the coups de main by which London has been at various times taken. The first of these was Wat Tyler's. Massing at Maidstone, and gathering still closer at Blackheath, Wat Tyler and his wild rabble poured down on London, which admitted them with little resistance. Lawyers and Flemings they slew everywhere, and the more the citizens feasted the rough intruders, the more savage and bloodthirsty they became. In Southwark they demolished the Marshalsea and King's Bench,

and in Lambeth they sacked the archiepiscopal palace. They destroyed Newgate, fired the house of the Knights Hospitallers at Clerkenwell, and that of St. John's at Highbury, and, seizing the Tower, chased away the queen-mother, and beheaded the archbishop and several knights. At their great bivouacs at Mile End and on Tower-hill, Wat Tyler made all new-comers swear that they would be true to King Richard and the Commons, and keep John of Gaunt from the throne. The next day the mob bore down on John's Palace in the Savoy, and burnt and destroyed everything it contained. They tore the silk and velvet into strips, they crushed the jewels in mortars, and beat up the gold and silver plate, and threw it into the Thames. But Wat Tyler allowed nothing to be stolen. One wretch, seen to slip a silver cup into his doublet, was tossed into the fire, and burnt to death. In the cellars which fell in, thirty-two of the rebels were buried alive. In the wildest tempest of their rage, these ruffians rolled some barrels, supposed to contain money, into the flames. In a moment they exploded, blew up the great hall, shook down many neighbouring houses, killed many men, and reduced the palace to ruins. Two days after, Wat Tyler, advancing insolently towards the king at an interview at Smithfield, was struck down by Walworth, mayor of London, and slain on the spot. The rebels then dispersed across the Islington fields, and the rebellion was at an end. Jack Straw left a name at Hampstead. Wat Tyler can never be forgotten, but Hob Carter, Tom Miller, John Ball, and the other obscure leaders of that great insurrection perished, history has not even recorded where.

In Henry the Sixth's reign a Kentish "rebel" named Jack Cade, headed one of these sudden attacks on London. As we have, very lately, dwelt at length upon this page of history*, it is not necessary to repeat the chronicle here, and we may pass on to the third dash at London, which was that of Wyatt's, in the reign of Queen Mary. Sir Thomas Wyatt, hot-headed and turbulent, had planned an insurrection to prevent the marriage of the saturnine queen with that gloomy Spaniard, Philip. Sir Peter Carew was to rouse Devonshire, the Duke of Suffolk the midland counties. But Carew rising before the preconcerted time, was defeated, and fled to France. The duke, on his way to Warwick and Leicester, was pursued by three hundred horse, taken, and brought prisoner to London. But Wyatt at first throve better. A captain named Brett, and eight hundred Londoners, came over to his head-quarters at Rochester, from the troops led against him by the Duke of Norfolk. Norfolk upon this retreated to London. Wyatt, marching into Southwark, demanded of the queen that she should surrender the Tower to him, should deliver four of her counsellors, and, lastly, that she should immediately marry an Englishman. But London Bridge was fortified against the rash rebel, and he could not force it. Upon this he marched to Kingston, and crossing the Thames with four thousand men, returned to London, which he hoped would at once rise in his favour. But the tide had turned, Piccadilly was thronged with pikes, and bows, and muskets. His men dwindled as he fought his way from Westminster, and near Ludgate, as he sat weary and dejected on a stone by the gate, he was arrested by Sir Maurice Berkely. Wyatt and seventy of his followers suffered for their wild raid on London, which endangered the life of the Princess Elizabeth, and brought poor gentle Lady Jane Grey to the scaffold.

In 1643, the parliament resolving to fortify the City, the work was carried out with great expedition. In those troublesome days London must have been always swarming with soldiers, and we perpetually find in the newspapers of those days such entries as the following: "His excellency the general (Sir Thomas Fairfax) drew this day, August 7th, 1647, most of his forces into Hyde Park, and marched through the City of London with all the horse and foot and train of artillery, with drums, trumpets, and colours flying. First, part of the horse marched in, then his excellency with his Life Guards (Cornet Joyce and some six or seven more bareheaded) encompassing him, then the foot, led on by Major-General Skippon. Presently after, the train of artillery. Lieutenant-General Cromwell brought up the rear of the foot, and Quarterman marched after the horse."

A short time after Cornet Joyce had seized King Charles at Holmby, the army and parliament fell out so violently that the dispute very nearly ended in a siege of London. The army, gathering eighty thousand men at Hounslow Heath, threatened the City. Their advanced posts were stationed about Brentford, Hounslow, and Twickenham, but they did not stop the car-

* See ALL THE YEAR ROUND, New Series, vol. iii., p. 181.

riage of provisions into London. In a lull of the negotiations, Colonel Rainsborough, with a brigade of horse, foot, and cannon, took Southwark, and the works and forts securing the end of old London Bridge. Rainsborough took the southern suburb without any opposition, the soldiers fraternising with him, and shaking hands with his men.

The parliament, prepared to oppose the rebellious soldiers at the west side of London, were thunderstruck to find what they had confided in as the strongest gate so easily taken. They then sent to propose terms, asking for a guard of horse and foot, and promising to open to the army all forts and passages. Fairfax replied that he would have all the western forts delivered to him immediately, those on the south side being already in Rainsborough's hands. The common council, blue with fright, and sitting night and day, instantly replied (with a due dread of pike and gun) that they would humbly submit to his command, and that now, under Almighty God, they did rely only upon his excellency's "honourable word for their protection and security." They then withdrew their militia along the whole line, as well as out of the forts, with all the cannon and ordnance, over which the general promptly put a guard. At Hyde Park the mayor and aldermen met the general, who received them sourly, and pushed back into their hands a big gold cup which they stammeringly presented on behalf of the City. The next day the army of horse, foot, and cannon marched through the City, which, extremely touched at the sight, immediately undertook to supply one hundred thousand pounds for the payment of the troops. Cromwell's men (for Cromwell was really the head of the army) behaved well, doing no damage, and speaking "no disrespective word to any man," proving their fine discipline, and the extraordinary temper and sobriety of both officers and soldiers. The army then marched over London Bridge into Southwark to the quarters assigned them, while some regiments were craftily posted in Westminster, the Strand, and Holborn, under pretence of being a guard to the parliament, but really to get a firm grip on the City. The general's headquarters were at Chelsea, the council of officers and agitators sat at Fulham and Chelsea, and the rest of the army was quartered between Hampton Court and London.

The last attack that London had to apprehend was in the reign of James the Second. It was shortly after James had fled, and the London mob had burnt the Roman Catholic chapels. A ground swell of terror spread through London. The cavalry were drawn out, the train-bands were under arms. The wretch Jeffreys had just been seized, disguised as a Newcastle sailor. Powis House, at the north-west corner of Lincoln's-inn-fields, was being threatened by the mob. Then arose a wild rumour that Faversham's Irish troops were marching from Hounslow on London, to take the City and massacre the Protestants. The City sprang to arms. At one in the morning the drums of the militia began to beat. Before two every window was illuminated; the chief avenues were barricaded. All travellers were stopped and questioned. Interested persons had spread these rumours of danger from the disbanded Irish. The Irish Panic went down as suddenly as it had arisen.

In the Commonwealth time, during one of the panics at the approach of the Royalists from Oxford, Newcastle and his white "Lambs," Rupert and his fiery horse, the citizens set to work with all their might piling up earth ramparts at Hyde Park Corner, in High Holborn, and, if we remember rightly, in Gray's-inn-road. Behind these, the train-bands and the gallant young apprentices were to gain courage, and discharge their muskets. Only fancy now, barricades at Temple Bar or in Pall Mall, and the windows of the club-houses full of country gentlemen, armed with chassepots, ready for a cut at the invader. Yet, joking apart, there is no doubt that our government has begun seriously to think of the defence of London from sudden forays of ambitious foreign powers. Ten years ago some not over hasty commissioners on national defences issued a report on this subject, in which they said: "There can be no doubt that the main object of an enemy invading the country would be to push for the capital, in the hope that if he succeeded in obtaining a command of it, such a disaster would result in our buying him off upon any terms he might think it expedient to make."

We should then be reduced to the pitiful and degraded condition of the later Saxons, who were always buying off those hungry Danes, swarms of whom succeeded one another with remorseless and relentless rapidity. We should have all the poor nations upon us one after another, and should

become a mere bone for every dog to gnaw at. We should be the mere money-bag in which every thief would dip his hand. The important point of central defence (the cuirassing, as it were, the heart of England), that the commissioners neglected, several eminent men, whose forte was engineering, took up and discussed in the public prints with sagacity and candour. Foremost among these writers were General Shaw Kennedy and Sir Joshua Jebb. General Kennedy, taking an imaginative and hopeful view of our future army, proposed to belt London with a girdle of small forts, each of them about two hundred yards square. These forts were to be raised at intervals of a mile, upon a circle having a five-mile radius round London. To garrison these forts he required two hundred and sixty-five thousand men, and for a movable auxiliary force to pivot round upon them an additional force of two hundred and fifty thousand. But where the half million of warriors were to be obtained, without resorting to Hindoo sepoys or New Zealand chieftians, General Kennedy did not sufficiently explain. Sir Joshua Jebb, in his turn, threw a wider girdle round the defenceless city, for he proposed to throw up field-works on commons, in parks, or streets, for a line of sixty miles, extending along high grounds all the way from Maidstone to Reading. Now, this was all very well for the south and western suburbs, but it left the north and east open to all invaders. A clever writer in the Cornhill Magazine suggested a still looser order of defence, that is, the erection of redoubts on all the chief eminences round London: Shooter's Hill, Norwood, Wimbledon, Harrow, Mill-hill, and Enfield; a range of strongholds so scattered and far apart, indeed, that they hardly amount to any defence at all, while a later writer, still further widening the line of resistance, proposes to include even Boxhill (twenty-two miles from London) in the enceinte of forts.

But of all the schemes projected, that of Mr. Eddy seems to us the most calm and feasible, and we propose, therefore, to consider his suggestions at some length. That gentleman, in a recent very business-like pamphlet, commences by showing, without any wish to create a panic among the timid and rich, the facilities which steam has given to ambitious and unscrupulous nations who desire our destruction or our humiliation.

The Defence Commissioners of 1860 avowed this alarming fact openly: "Since the application of steam to the propulsion of vessels," said the report, "we can no longer rely upon being able to prevent the landing of a hostile force in this country." Our old bulwarks, the wooden walls of Old England, can no longer rely on barring up the Channel. If they were in the Downs when the hostile fleet is at Yarmouth, what use would they be? Any foggy night a fleet of steam ironclads might pour an army on defenceless portions of the east coast, and secure a position before London ever heard of the danger.

The enceinte of the forts of Paris is about forty miles. That proposed by Mr. Eddy is sixty-nine, of which eleven are to be formed by the river, forty-two by existing railways, four and a half by railways already projected, and eleven and a half by railways would have to be made. The quantity of earth to be removed to form a vast ditch would be about one million cubic yards, or one and a half million tons. This, it is computed, would take twenty thousand navvies five days only to dig out. This fosse would be twenty-four feet wide and seven and a half feet deep. The bank for the riflemen would be nine feet high and ten feet wide. The line of defence would begin at a stream about half a mile beyond the Alexandra Park, which it would follow to the low grounds of the Lea near Tottenham; then by the low level Great Eastern lines it would pass by the Barking or Dagenham Creek to the river. A little beyond Erith, marshes and low ground would bring it to the Dartford loop line near Lewisham, whence it would follow the East Croydon to Croydon. There would be at this place a ditch run for almost a mile through the chalk. Crossing then the Epsom line, it would run to Merton, thence follow the high level South-Eastern to Kingston, and there strike the river near the water works. At Kew the line would follow up the North and South-Western Junction and Midland, and lastly, follow up a branch of the Brent to Finchley.

These fifty-eight miles of ditch, Mr. Eddy nicely calculates, would require one hundred and sixty-two acres of land, which, being chiefly London clay, and unfit for building, would not cost more than one hundred and sixty-two thousand pounds. By this scheme the seven streams that water the suburbs of London—that is, the Brent, the Lea, the New River, the Cray, the Ravensbourne, the Wandle, and the Mole—streams springing chiefly from the

chalk hills, and that have at all times of the year a copious flow, are all pressed into the service, and utilised for the defence of London. The Kew Water Works would serve to flood the ditch. The Colne is useful on the west. On the north-east side the line of the high-level sewer, from its junction with the North Metropolitan line at Old Ford to the rising ground on Plaistow, forms a ready-made dam for flooding the valley of the Lea. "This is so level," says the author whose scheme we here abridge, "that this dam, together with another of above one mile in length along the Walthamstow road, would, I believe, form a lake all the way up to Waltham Abbey, such as no troops could cross. It would, however, require works near Plaistow and Tottenham to prevent the dams from being cut." A railway parallel to the ditch, along which guns, mitrailleuses, and men could be rapidly run from place to place, is part of this design. Where the high-level lines cross roads, the arches must be marked by high banks, which would be provided with rails and turntables to enable the guns to command the road.

The recent siege of Paris has shown that guns, rapidly moved from spot to spot by a protected railway, form one of the strongest possible lines of defence, because the besieger never knows where to direct his fire, but, whilst laying his guns at the spot from whence he has been annoyed, receives a shot in his flanks. Mr. Eddy proves, from the sieges of Paris and Metz, that lines of earthworks, even rapidly thrown up and unsupported by forts, and exposed to the fire of heavy guns, if held by steady and resolute men, will keep out even a superior force.

This circle of defence, ditch and railway, would run round Woolwich (one of our dangerous points in a bombardment), and would embrace all London and its suburbs with all the great railway junctions, and the gas and water works. It would elbow the enemy back to a safe distance from the centre and most densely peopled part of London; London, singularly enough, being hid by hills from every part of the circle. The area of population has hardly anywhere, except at Croydon or Kingston, overflowed this line, which runs along a low and unwholesome level of London clay adapted for inundation.

This plan has certainly many advantages over the ring of forts proposed by Major Palliser and others. In the first place, it can be rapidly completed; secondly, it involves little or no sacrifice of valuable property; thirdly, it is in accordance with the current opinion in favour of a continuous line of defence; and, fourthly, it involves no interference with existing roads and bridges, which need only be cut on emergencies.

There is no winking at the fact, if Mr. Eddy's figures are correct, that rich London is in constant danger now from any greedy enemy. The Russians have now nineteen monitors, drawing only ten and a half feet of water, while of our fifty-one ironclads, thirty-seven, Mr. Eddy says, draw above twenty-one feet. Now there is a large extent of Essex shore where vessels of light draught could land troops without molestation from our bulkier and more cumbrous ships, unsuited to defend our shallow coasts.

A nation may be cautious and yet brave. We must not rest in a fool's paradise of self-complacent helplessness. Without any wish for bloated armaments, and with the most loyal tax-paying dread of fresh expense, let us calmly consider Mr. Eddy's sensible and calm view of our present position. Germany, bleeding from one hundred thousand wounds, has no wish at present for anything but peace. But the time will come when the graves will grow green, and the widows and orphans will cease weeping, and the war fever may revive. Half a million of men, who have trodden down France and threatened England, may pine for fresh conquests. It may suddenly appear necessary for United Germany to win colonies, and a foothold in Central Asia, Persia, or India. It is a poor statesman, indeed, who cannot find a grievance. We shall grow impatient at the scorn expressed or implied, and war may be the result. The Germans, grown veterans in six months of victory, despise our loosely disciplined volunteers, and will long to prove their superiority to a peaceful and commercial country that rests upon its old glory. They will fly straight at London, the centre of our wealth. Our fleet may no longer be able to barricade the Channel. Steam has done much to level the inequalities of nations. According to Mr. Eddy, the Germans have now nine large ironclads, nine wooden frigates, all drawing less than seventeen feet of water, four corvettes, and twenty-two gunboats. Germany is striving hard to become a preponderating naval power, and she is as well able to buy as we are to build. The Russians, Prussia's steadfast allies, have in the Baltic nineteen

iron-clad monitors, each armed with two powerful guns; and we are still building vessels, perhaps no more seaworthy than the unfortunate Captain. The naval port of Jahde is said to be already very complete, and the contemplated ship canal connecting Kiel in the Baltic with Tonning in the German Ocean, will place the Russian and German fleets within twenty-eight hours' steam of Yarmouth; and Tonning cannot be blockaded, as the fleet will have two exits six hundred miles apart. For transports the Germans have their five lines of American steamers, besides all the English steam colliers and merchant steamers they could seize on an emergency in the Baltic and German ports. To resist such a sudden dash, we have a defenceless City, an unprotected arsenal, and railways unprepared for the sudden conveyance to an assailed coast of any large body of men.

"All railway managers," says Mr. Eddy, "appear to be sworn to secrecy on this subject; but it is believed that no single line could take on an emergency ten thousand men in the course of a day from London to the east coast—to say nothing of horses and artillery."

Our defencelessness is our danger. There is no use in blinking the fact. Russia has the Crimea to avenge; Prussia her past inferiority. Let us be wise in time. Absurd as it may seem to throw up earthworks, to resist invisible enemies, it is better done too soon than too late. We have still our old pluck, and our physical vigour still renders the bayonet irresistible in our hands. Our colliers and miners are still giants endowed with the old Berseker strength. The sons of Nelson's sailors will be as terrible behind iron as behind wooden walls. Our gentry are born cavalry soldiers, and are as brave as they are chivalrous. Our engineers yield the palm to none. There may be Moltkes even now latent at Sandhurst and Woolwich, and Falkensteins at the Duke of Cambridge's elbow. The race of Napiers and Lyndochs, of Havelocks, ay, and of Wellingtons, is not yet extinct. We need fear no one with our courage and our wealth. Our fleets would soon be in every sea before the third trumpet of war had sounded. We must let no unworthy panic betray the fears of our rich men who see in war a suspension of business, and that only. Defence, not defiance, is our motto. It is too late for us to start in the trade of conquerors; but we must take care of ourselves, and above all things we must guard against the possibility of a successful dash upon London, the consequences of which would, assuredly, be unspeakably disastrous.

PLOGARRIAN.

IN SEVEN CHAPTERS. CHAPTER III.

About a twelvemonth subsequently to the latest of the events related in the preceding chapter, the good ship La Belle Louise, of Havre de Grace, regular trader between that port and the coasts of the Pacific, was returning from a prolonged, but prosperous voyage. It was the third voyage which Monsieur le Capitaine Morel had ever made in that distinguished capacity. And as the brave Norman, after a life spent on salt water, had married a wife only on returning from his first voyage as captain, he may perhaps be excused if, on leaping ashore on the quay at Havre from the boat which had brought him from his ship in the offing, his first thought was to run for a hurried visit to No. 10, Rue de la Côte, instead of, as in strict duty bound, hastening at once to the office of his owners. The long hours of many a dreary middle watch, as La Belle Louise was ploughing her way through the long rolling swell of the Atlantic with a favouring breeze from the west, had been rendered less tedious by thoughts of Marie Morel, née Givray, in her snug neat little home at No. 10, Rue de la Côte.

During his first voyage as captain, such hours had been mainly cheered by somewhat less peaceful thinkings of the bright dark eyes, fair clear cheeks, and trim figure of Marie Givray. The second voyage had been filled with thoughts quite as closely circling round her, though more tranquilly. But during all the hours of this third voyage, which duty would spare to such dalliance with home fancies, it was not the wife, though as dear as ever—dearer, Captain Morel would have sworn—who had the husband's thought all to herself. For before her husband had started on this third voyage, Marie had presented him with a little daughter, the very miniature of herself, as he declared.

It had been a hard task to tear himself away from the mother and child, at the call of duty, when the former had barely recovered from her confinement. And never had Morel jumped on shore at the end of a voyage with so much of painful anxiety as he now felt.

He had not made two steps on the quay, however, before he was recognised by an acquaintance.

"What Morel, mon vieux! Is that you? The wife has been on the look out for you; but she hardly expected you for a week or so yet. You have made a fair wind of every breeze."

"All well at home?" asked the sailor, almost breathlessly.

"All well, my boy! And Madame Morel looking prettier than ever! Make haste up the hill."

"Mother and child all right?" asked Morel again, observing with quick misgiving that the other had not mentioned the latter object of his anxiety.

"Mother and child! I passed down the Rue de la Côte yesterday, and saw 'em both! And as pretty a babe as one would wish to look on. Allez, Monsieur Morel! Mais qu'est ce que vous avez là, mon vieux! What is that little chap you have in your hand there? Hein? Are you going to take him home to Madame Morel, eh? One would say that it was permissible to doubt of the welcome in store for ce petit moutard là!"

The "petit moutard" thus alluded to was a fine-looking child some two years old, or a month or two more, whom Morel was tenderly and carefully leading by the hand; certainly a strange enough present for the young captain to be bringing home to his wife from his long voyage.

"Pas de farces, ami Gigoux!" returned the captain, half seriously, though with a laugh in his eye. "Marie will have a very cordial welcome for the little fellow, never fear; a child intrusted to my care having a wife that can look after him, and one of my own. But that concerns nobody but me and Marie. Au revoir!"

"Come along, little man!" he continued, speaking to the child, who clung with a scared air to his hand; "I suppose I must carry you up the hill. There, put your arm round my neck, and sit fast. That's it; now we will be at home in the twinkling of an eye! Those may laugh that like at the trouvaille Captain Morel is bringing home to his wife! I know my Marie better than that."

And thus speaking and thinking, the brave captain, relieved of his anxiety as to the well-being of his dear ones, trudged on with the child sitting upon his shoulder, and in a very few minutes found himself at the door of No. 10, Rue de la Côte.

The knock of the bright brass knocker on the bright green door was almost instantly answered by the appearance of a still brighter female head in a spotless "cauchoise" cap at a window of the second floor; such appearance for an instant barely sufficient to allow the captain, who had taken the child from his shoulder, and was now holding him by the hand, to catch a glimpse of the cap and the head it surmounted, and to hear the little shriek of delight which accompanied the disappearance of it again within the window.

In the next instant Marie was at the open door, breathless with pleasure, and with the speed with which she had rushed down the stairs; a condition which was not improved by the vigour of the embrace in which her husband's arms encircled her.

"Oh, mon ami, how I have wearied for this minute! You are well, my cabbage!" (This the good Norman woman said, because she was very fond of her husband.) "You are well! I see it! Ma foi! You look younger and better than you did when you went away! Absence agrees with you, méchant! Come in! Come and see our little Marie! She is lovely as an angel! and so grown! It is a true wonder! Come in! Are we to pass the rest of the day in the street?"

So saying, the young wife turned towards the foot of the staircase, and her husband followed her, shutting the door, and leading the child, who had been observing the foregoing scene with grave and wondering eyes, along the passage.

"Mais—what have we here then?" said Marie, turning round at the foot of the stairs, and taking heed of the "little stranger" for the first time. "Qu'est que c'est que cet enfant, Morel? Qu'est ce que ça veut dire, mon ami?"

And there was a sort of little catch in the speaker's breath, and a shade of misgiving in her manner as she asked these questions, which did not escape her husband's ear.

"Let us go up-stairs, ma bien aimée! There is nothing to conceal from you, and nothing to vex you, my dearest wife. Tu me connais n'est ce pas? Allez donc! But my heart is yearning to embrace our little Marie. We will speak of this little one afterwards."

And then the captain, treading very gingerly, and thereby causing his boots to make more noise by their creaking than the most careless step would have made, was led to the side of the cradle in which the little Marie was reposing, with an air of reverential mystery on the part of his wife, which bespoke her consciousness of the ineffable and unparalleled glory of the sight that was about to burst upon her husband's eyes.

It is rarely that a father's raptures can visibly attain the height demanded by a mother's wondering adoration of her first babe. But perhaps a seafaring life is good in that respect. A captain of a ship don't see babies every day, and sees his own after perhaps a twelvemonth's absence from it, and a twelvemonth's thinking of the absent ones at home. The result in Captain Morel's case was a frame of mind nearly adequate, even in his wife's opinion, to the greatness of the occasion. The bronzed and abundantly bearded sailor stood by the cradle-side, with shoulders raised and hands half lifted, as if longing but not daring to take the wonderful creature in his arms, while his head bent down rested on his great broad chest, and a smile of intense delight slowly came over his face, as just one great tear gathered in either eye.

The child opened wide its large deep blue eyes as he stood thus, and staring up steadily into the face above her, oh, wonder of wonders! said with unmistakable distinctness, "Dada!"

There was a theme for after-talk, and ever newly springing wonder and delight! Captain Morel was never tired of discussing the portent with his wife; but I do not think that he spoke much of it to his friends out of doors. But how often the wondrous tale was repeated by Madame Morel to every mother in the Rue de la Côte, is a matter that passes the power of any statistician to estimate.

"Take her up, Jean!" said Marie, nodding gravely to her husband, as became the seriousness of the occasion, but with a suppressed chuckle of delight in her voice. "You may take her in your arms—carefully, you know—carefully, mon ami!" she repeated, fluttering, with her own hands ready to remedy on the instant any awkwardness on the part of the sailor father, as he availed himself, not without some trepidation, of the privilege accorded to him.

All this time the little stranger boy had been standing with his little shoulder leaning against the corner of a chair near the door of the room, very gravely watching all that had passed; but not approvingly, as it seemed, for one little finger was squeezed into the corner of one eye, and there was a little movement of the lips, which seemed to indicate that a rising roar of weeping was only suppressed by the awe of the new circumstances and strange surroundings.

At length, when all the varied and never-before-equalled perfections of the little Marie had been duly pointed out and descanted on; and when the captain had sat down with his child in his arms in an excruciatingly constrained and unprecedented attitude, intended to afford security against the possibility of little Marie jumping, or sliding, or rolling, or slipping, or oozing out of his arms on to the floor, Madame Morel allowed her attention to revert to the little stranger. Marie by this time had, by some female system of logic, reached the conclusion that, however mysterious the appearance of the strange child might be, and however vividly her curiosity might be excited by the mystery of it, there was nothing in the matter that could give any umbrage to her feelings as a wife.

"Come hither, my little man," she said, calling the child across the room to her, and opening her arms, as she sat beside her husband, to serve as a sort of haven into which he might run with safety at the conclusion of his voyage across the bricked floor; "come hither and tell me thy name."

The child came across to her, not with a run, as little Marie was wont to do, but slowly, staidly, and gravely stumping in careful fashion, and pausing once or twice to redress his balance.

"Now tell me thy name, little slow and sure!" she said, encircling him, not untenderly, with her arms, as he arrived.

"Zean!" said the child, looking up into her face with a melancholy gravity.

"Jean!" said Marie, turning to her husband; "that is your name, mon ami!"

"Yes, I gave him mine, for want of a better; but whether he has ever been baptised or no, and whether he may have any other name, I can't say," said the captain.

"Mon Dieu! And where Has he any other name?" asked Marie, more and more mystified.

"I have called him Jean Delaroche, seeing that it was necessary to call him something. But what his real name is, I have no more notion than you have, wife. Tenez! the child was intrusted—yes; intrusted to me," continued the captain, after a pause, as if he had doubted for a minute of the propriety or exactitude of the phrase, but had been satisfied that it was correct, on consideration; "but let us wait till we have put the poor tired little fellow to bed, and then I will tell you all about it, and a queer story it is. I won't speak of it before him; for he is a cute little chap, and understands more than you would think for. And it is just as well not to freshen up any remembrance he may have on the subject, as you will see. The fact is,

that I have no more idea than you have who he is; and be it as it may, he shall be sent away out of the house in some way or other, if you do not like to keep him here. It is, as I said, a queer story enough; but you know, Marie, that when I tell you anything, I don't tell you lies!"

Marie felt no doubt that the story her husband promised her would be the perfect truth; and she made up her mind to wait as patiently as she could for the gratification of her curiosity, till she and Jean Morel should find themselves alone.

And it was very soon determined between the captain and his wife that the little Jean should remain with them. He was evidently about the same age as their own child, and would be, Marie said, an excellent playfellow for her; much better than that she should be alone in the house, or dependent for playfellows on the children of the neighbours, who might be anything, for what they knew.

Perhaps the little Jean might be somewhat older than their Marie, he was so grave and staid in his manner; but that might be due to the circumstances under which he had passed the first months of his life. He seemed a strong, healthy child, dark in complexion, with regular and rather delicately cut features, and very fine large eyes.

So, when Captain Morel again went to sea, Jean Delaroche was left with the good and kind Marie. And there was a nine days' wonder among the neighbours; and the young wife had to endure at first a few malicious smiles, and nods, and knowing winks, and assertions, that "Vraiment Madame Morel était d'une bontè envers son mari! mais d'une bontè par trop naive! c'etait inconcevable!" on the part of her dear friends and neighbours. But she had her logic, and had drawn her conclusions, and was not to be shaken in them. And when the nine days were over little Jean Delaroche was accepted in the Rue de la Côte as a fait accompli; and the chattering came to an end. And Madame Marie had kept her husband's secret. The most assiduous of the chatterers, and the most spiteful of the dealers in winks and insinuations, had alike failed to extract from her one iota of information on the subject.

And gradually, and more on the initiative of little Marie than of little Jean, the two children grew to be great and close friends. And, of course, Jean began to call Marie his little wife; and Marie made no objection whatever to being so called, until Captain Morel had gone forth and returned some ten times on as many voyages to the far shores of the Pacific. Then she began to say that it was nonsense talking in that way, and thought that she and Jean ought rather to consider themselves as brother and sister.

One day, on the captain's return after a longer absence than usual—a voyage of nearly fifteen months—on his asking Marie—now grown to be a tall slip of a girl, not nearly so pretty as she had been two years before, and still less pretty than she would be two years later—after her little husband Jean, Marie tossed her head, and told him she did not like such nonsense.

The captain and his good wife had a longish talk that night, after the children were gone to bed, and it turned mainly upon the desirability of "doing something" with reference to young Delaroche. It began to become manifest to the excellent couple that the time would soon come when it would not be desirable that he and their daughter should continue to live on the terms they had hitherto been on under the same small roof. It was all very well talking about sisters and brothers; but people don't become each other's sisters and brothers by deciding to call themselves so. On the other hand, it was very expedient that some forethought should be taken as to the future destination of the poor foundling. It would, of course, be necessary that he should do something for his living.

The result of this conversation was, that before the worthy couple laid their heads on their pillows, it had been settled between them that the captain should on the morrow go to Rouen to pay a visit to his brother, the Reverend Ignace Morel, who was a canon of the cathedral there, and very comfortably off. If he could be induced to take the lad, partly as a servant, partly as a protégé, such an arrangement would, doubtless, be the means of giving the boy something more of education than he was likely to get in any other manner, and at the same time would put him in the way of earning his own livelihood.

The captain was not one of the men who, when they have taken a resolution, allow a habit of procrastinating to interfere with it, on the pretence of further "thinking about it." On the morrow, as had been settled between him and his wife, he started for Rouen, and took Jean Delaroche with him. The parting between Madame Morel and Marie and the boy, who had so long been as one of themselves, was not a dry-eyed one. But boys must go forth into

the world, and at the age of young Delaroche they are rarely disinclined to do so.

On the next day the captain returned to Havre alone. The notion had turned out a most fortunate one. The reverend canon was, as it happened, just then in want of such a lad in his establishment. He had been much pleased with Jean, and Mademoiselle Vezin, the priest's old housekeeper, took quite a fancy to him at first sight.

"I am right glad that it has been all so fortunately settled. Ignace will be good to the boy, I know. He will do better for him than we could have done. And it would not have done for him to continue much longer here," said the captain.

"No doubt of that, poor little fellow! I hope he will do well, for I have quite got to love the child, and that is the truth."

"Yes, you women are for all the world like the hens. You get to love anything that you are set to brood over," said the captain, laughing.

"Fi donc, Jean Morel. Comme si c'etoit——"

"Ta, ta, ta! ne nous fachous pas. Est ce que jè ne connois pas le cœur de ma bonne Marie. Come, let us be off to bed," said the captain.

And thus the destiny of Jean Delaroche was settled.

CHAPTER IV.

In sending the boy Jean Delaroche to the Reverend Ignace Morel at Rouen, the good captain and his wife had done even better for him than they had ventured to hope. The little fellow seemed admirably well fitted to suit such a position as that which had been made for him in the family of the well-to-do canon of the Norman capital. Gentle, docile, intelligent, and graver in his disposition and manner than seemed to be proper to his years, he soon endeared himself both to the priest, who was a man some fifteen years older than his brother, the merchant-service captain, and—which was perhaps still more important—to the strictly firm and proper Mademoiselle Vezin, the canon's gouvernante.

Before he had been a month in the priest's service, the gouvernante, whose claim to that title was based on the most etymological accuracy, had declared that it was truly a credit to the establishment to have such a lad as a member of it. Mademoiselle Vezin's mind had been sore vexed, and her temper severely tried, by a long series of undesirable predecessors to Jean Delaroche, that it was a most welcome comfort to her to be waited on and obeyed by so staid a lad as little Jean. He was beginning to be very good-looking also, dark of hair and eye, and olive pale of cheek, which did not make the pleasant respectableness of having such a lad any the less acceptable in the gouvernante's eyes. As for the priest himself, he was quite charmed with the quick intelligence and aptitude for study which the lad manifested.

Every morning from the time when the canon returned from early morning mass at the neighbouring grand old church, till eleven o'clock, the hour of his reverence's déjeuner, little Jean was closeted with his master in the canon's study for the purpose of receiving all the instruction which the good priest was able to impart. Of course this included, nay, mainly consisted of, instruction in the Latin language. The boy could already read and write, and was probably a better arithmetician than his master. And what naturally could come next, if it were not the rudiments of Latin?

How the path in life of a serving-man could be likely to be made more easy or pleasant to him by a knowledge of Latin, the good priest might have been puzzled perhaps to say, and probably never asked himself. But it was good to impart instruction, and surely, when one could already read and write, the next thing meant by education was Latin.

So little Jean went through the Latin grammar; and the canon began to be proud of as well as pleased with his pupil. Others of the cathedral clergy were invited to hear how wonderfully the Reverend Chanoine Morel's errand boy could conjugate amo, amas, amavi in every mood and tense, and even audio, audis, audivi, down to the gerunds and supines. And then the ambitious canon ventured onwards to the Colloquies of Erasmus. And then his still increasing success began to suggest to him the idea, that so gifted an intelligence, joined to so excellent a disposition, ought certainly to be secured to the service of the Church.

It cannot be denied, I think, that the Church of Rome has ever been more true to herself and to her interest in such matters than our own. Certainly it would have been a very strange and unusual thing for an English rector to think of causing his footboy to be brought up for the Church because he happened to be a good and brightly intelligent lad. And it is equally certain that there was nothing very extraordinary or unprecedented, among the clergy of the Reverend Ignace Morel's

church, in the idea which presented itself to the canon.

The first step which he took towards the realisation of it was to obtain for his pupil a place as chorister in the cathedral church to which he himself belonged, a matter which, as Jean Delaroche among other good gifts developed a good voice, was not at all difficult. And this position, though serving, as it were, to set the Church's mark on him, was not incompatible with his continuance, for the present, in his position in the canon's household, and the prosecution of his education.

As time went on, the canon's notion approved itself more and more to his mind. And before the boy was fifteen it had been a settled thing that he was to be duly educated for the priesthood. Others of the cathedral clergy had been led to take an interest in him. And when he had reached fifteen there was no difficulty in procuring for him a "bourse" at the seminary attached to the diocese.

Doubtless the young seminarist's career was not accomplished without some drawing of the strings of the canon's well-replenished purse. But such demands must have been moderate. And for such a purpose, no doubt, the audit for the supplies was passed without much difficulty by that severe auditor, Mademoiselle Vezin, the canon's gouvernante.

It was about three years after Delaroche had entered the seminary, that one morning a letter was brought to the canon from Havre, containing very sad tidings. Poor Madame Morel, his sister-in-law, was dead. Happily the good captain had been at home at the time, and his Marie had breathed her last in his arms. It was a consolation, though a very bitter one, that it should have been so. Poor Morel was heart-broken as it was, but it would have been worse for him to have returned from sea to find his home desolate.

But it was necessary for him to go to sea again, and that shortly. Though the captain had done well, he had not yet laid up such store for his old age, and specially for his little Marie, that he could afford to nurse his grief in idleness. Besides, he had the good sense to know that, in every way, work was best for him. To sea, therefore, he would go, at the time fixed for his sailing by his present engagement with his owners—about three weeks from the date of his wife's death.

And the most immediate care, therefore, that pressed upon him was for the safe disposal of his sole remaining treasure, his little Marie—no longer such, indeed, on anybody's lips but her father's, but a tall, and singularly beautiful girl of eighteen.

Poor Morel had nobody to turn to in this need save his brother. He had, indeed, little doubt that his brother would gladly take the charge of his niece, but he knew that there was a superior power to be consulted. The captain had no idea of imposing a burden, in a pecuniary sense, on his brother. He had no need to do so. He was well able to provide for his child's expenses. And he had a strong trust that this view of the matter might render the gouvernante not inexorable. In fact, in the priest's little household, the rule that where there is enough for one there is enough for two was eminently applicable. And, indeed, the addition of a boarder, paying for her entertainment, in such a family was equivalent to a decided saving or increase of means. Captain Morel was too much a Norman for these considerations not to have presented themselves to him, or for him not to be quite aware that they would have their due weight with Mademoiselle Vezin. Nevertheless, the fear of having one who might become a rival too near the throne would very possibly weigh more with the gouvernante, who had ruled sole and supreme for so many years. And the brave captain was anxious and ill at ease till he should get a reply to the letter he had written to his brother.

"This is sad news, mademoiselle," said the canon, looking up from his arm-chair into the gouvernante's face, as she stood behind him, looking over his shoulder as he read the letter—not surreptitiously, for it was quite a matter of course that she should read his letters; "very sad news, indeed. Poor Marie! She has died very young. What a pretty creature she was."

"Beauty won't keep folks alive, Monsieur le Chanoine. Au contraire," said Mademoiselle Vezin, pushing a truism into a falsehood in the energy of her conviction on the subject.

"C'est bien vrai!—bien vrai!" said the canon, abstractedly. "My brother does not say whether poor Marie had all her sacraments duly; but doubtless she had—doubtless. My brother is a good man, and a pious. I will say twenty masses for the repose of her soul myself. Poor Marie! Requiescat in pace."

"Mais, il me semble, Monsieur le Chanoine, that it is not exactly that that Monsieur le Capitaine asks of you, though, doubtless, he is a very pious Christian."

"He would not have thought of it in the

first violence of his grief, you know. But he would wish it all the same. Poor Marie!"

"No doubt, no doubt, Monsieur le Chanoine," returned the gouvernante, with a little impatience, "but don't you see what he does ask you?"

"About little Marie, about the child? Of course she must come here, ma bonne Vezin. Jean cannot take her to sea with him, don't you see, and she a child in arms only the other day."

"That was a good many days ago, your reverence. Marie Morel is just about the same age as notre Jean. I remember that. She must be seventeen, if she is a day."

"But even if she is, ma très-chère, it would hardly do for her father to take her to sea with him. From all I have heard I should not think a ship a good place for a young person at that time of life—for my niece, you know, Vezin."

"No, your reverence. I should think not. But the question is, what is to be done with the young lady?"

"There is the room over the study, which opens from your own chamber, Vezin. Would not that be well adapted for little Marie?"

"Your reverence has decided on having her here then? But I think it would be well to remember that she is not 'little Marie' any more, but a young person of eighteen, which is quite another matter."

The canon perceived that he had made a blunder, that he had been too precipitate, and he hastened to repair the error.

"As for having her here, poor child, the lodging of her is, of course, the least part of the matter. And it would be altogether out of the question, if it were not for you, ma bonne Vezin. What could I do with a young person of eighteen? The grand question is, whether you could be persuaded to undertake the superintendence and formation of her? Had it not been for the knowledge that you are so eminently fitted for such a trust, my brother would never have thought of sending the poor girl to me. Of course it will be a great burden on your shoulders, my poor friend. But I think you will find the child docile and obedient. She has been well brought up. And perhaps — perhaps, ma chère Vezin, you might find the house less dull and dreary if you had such a companion."

"Oh! pour ça! your reverence knows that I want no companionship beyond such as you are good enough to accord me. I have never wanted any other these fourteen years, and I am not likely to begin to wish for it now. If the young person comes here" (the canon knew at this point of the conversation that the object was gained) "if she is to come here, of course I shall do my duty by her. That your reverence knows."

"That I am quite sure of, ma chère Vezin," put in the canon.

"But in order to do it effectually, it will be absolutely necessary that I should have authority over the young lady, and that such authority should be respected and upheld."

"Authority! Of course your authority must be upheld and respected. Ma foi! Without that we should all be in a bad way."

"It is true, that in another point of view the arrangement would not be a disadvantageous one," pursued the mollified gouvernante. "The terms proposed by Monsieur le Capitaine are not illiberal. It cannot be denied that two in a family do not cost the double of one. Certainly the arrangement will be a profitable one, as, indeed, it ought to be, for there will be care and trouble enough."

And thus it was arranged that Marie Morel was to be domiciled in her reverend uncle's house.

Some eight years previously Jean Delaroche had been sent to live under the canon's roof, very mainly for the purpose of separating him from the captain's daughter, then a pretty child. Now circumstances, those all-powerful shapers of human destinies, were sending Marie Morel, a lovely girl of eighteen, after him. For though it was true that his home was now at the seminary, Delaroche was naturally a frequent visitor at the house of his patron, and would assuredly have abundant opportunities of seeing Marie, unless, indeed, he were forbidden to come thither in order to prevent such meetings.

But then Delaroche was now, not, it is true a vowed, but a destined priest. And of course that made all the difference.

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THE ROSE AND THE KEY.

CHAPTER XXXVI. IN THE GALLERY.

"WHAT a beautiful clear evening it is," said Miss Max, doing her best to find a topic. "The stars look almost as brilliant as they do in a frost. You have come a long way, Mr. Marston, I dare say."

"Coming here, it seemed nothing," he answered, with a look at the young lady.

"It was a very fine night, also, when we took leave after our little tea-party at Cardyllion, do you remember?"

"I do remember," he said very gently.

"You'll turn up at the ball, of course?" answered Miss Max.

"That depends on who are going," he answered. "Is there the least chance of your being there?"

"Who? I?" with a little laugh, said Miss Maud, to whom, nearly in a whisper, the question had been addressed.

"I think that was a cruel question," she continued, "that is, if you remembered what I said, when we last spoke about this ball."

"I remember every syllable you said, not only about this ball," he answered, "but about everything else we talked of. I ought not to have asked, perhaps, but changes, you know, are perpetually occurring, and you, I think, forget how very long it is since I last saw you."

"The interval has brought no change for me—no good change, I mean," she answered. "I shall be rather busy to-night, and tired enough in the morning, I dare say. My gay cousin, Maximilla, is going, or coming, shall I say, as we are here, to the ball with a young lady whose dress I have seen." And here Miss Maud laughed very merrily. "And I shall have, I think, to help her maid to put it on her."

"Maud, will you be quiet?" said the old lady, very much vexed. "I—I—well, it is very disagreeable."

"It vexes her my telling it; but it is quite true," whispered Maud. "I must see that young lady's maid in ten minutes."

"You don't mean to say you are going so soon?" exclaimed Mr. Marston.

"I must leave this in about ten minutes," said Maud.

"Well, I believe you must," put in Miss Max; "and so must I, for that matter. And, Mr. Marston, your sister is to be at the ball; she is coming with the Tinterns; of course you will look in? And I really want to introduce you to a very particular friend, and you must look in; if you don't, I give you my word, I'll never answer a note of yours again as long as I live."

"Under that threat I shall certainly turn up," he said.

He glanced at Maud, and thought she looked a little sad.

"Where will you be when the ball commences?" he inquired, with a hope that he might have divined the cause of those looks. "Here?"

"Certainly not. Oh, no!"

"And, surely—I have so much to say. It is two months since I saw you, and you can't think how I have longed for this little meeting, and lived, ever since, upon the hope of it. You can't think of reducing it, after all, to a few minutes!"

Miss Max understood, though she did not hear the terms of it, this ardent murmur close to Maud's pretty ear, and she said, good-naturedly:

"I have not had time yet to read old Heyrick's letter, and I really must finish it, Mr. Marston. I know you'll excuse me for a moment."

And this spacious document, which she

luckily had about her, Miss Medwyn unfolded, and proceeded to peruse, with her glasses to her eyes, greatly to the relief of Mr. Marston.

"I have ever so much to say, and I've been looking forward to this chance of telling you a great deal—everything; and—may I say it? yes, I do say it—I thought you did not seem so friendly as our old acquaintance might have warranted. You were cold and indifferent—I am sure it is all right; but, oh! if you knew how it pained me—as if you did not care ever so little to see your old Cardyllion friend again. And I, who have never thought of any one but you all that time! And—oh, Heaven!—if you knew how it tortures me, thinking of the cruel injustice of fortune that condemns you to a life of so much trouble and anxiety, and how I have longed to tell you how I honour you, how, if I dare speak it, I adore you; how, every day, I long to lay myself and all my hopes at your feet. But you will never like me; you will never care for me. It never yet was the way to be loved to love too madly."

"What am I to say to all this? Who am I? You may know something of Miss Medwyn, my cousin Maximilla, but of me you can know nothing. There are inequalities everywhere. I have often wished that fortune had placed me exactly where she is. But good people tell us that whatever is is best, and now you must promise me this—you must, if our acquaintance is to go on—that you will not talk to me so wildly any more. Why can't we be very good friends, and grow better acquainted, and come, at last, to know one another? Why should you try to force me to say begone, and to lose an acquaintance: I who have so few? I think that is utterly selfish."

Her cheeks were flushed with a beautiful colour, and there was an angry fire in her vexed eyes as she said this.

"I must go away in a few minutes, but I shall be back again somewhere about this room to-night, and you will have little difficulty in finding me again to say good-bye. As for me, I feel sad to-night, as if I were parting with an old friend and a quiet life. I am half sorry I came here.

She pressed Miss Max's arm lightly as she spoke, and that lady lowering her letter, looked rather sharply round on her, a little vexed.

"What is it, dear? I wish you would allow me to read my letter," said the old lady.

"It is time to go. I must go, at least," said Maud.

"Well, go you shall," replied the old lady, crumpling up her letter, and standing erect, with her head a little high. "There's nothing to delay me a moment."

And relenting a little, she added:

"Mr. Marston, would you mind seeing me across the street? We are going to the Old Hall Inn, exactly opposite."

You may suppose that Mr. Marston was very much at her service.

"Shall I be sure to find you?" he murmured, very earnestly, to Maud, as they turned to go.

"I think so," she said. "Now, you must take care of my cousin."

The young lady went down, and crossed the street at the other side of Miss Max, and seeing her maid about to mount the staircase of the inn, she joined her, passed her by with a word, and ran up the stairs, without once turning her pretty head to look back on her friends in the hall.

Maximilla was vexed for her friend, Mr. Marston.

"I did not say, in my answer, because it embarrasses me, sometimes, trying to write what I feel, how very nice I thought your letter—how particularly nice!"

"Oh, Miss Medwyn, do you think she will ever like me?"

"I only know she ought, Mr. Marston; but, as you see, she is an odd girl. One thing I assure you, you have a very fast friend in me, and, mind you don't fail me. You must come to the ball, for I want to introduce you to the only person living who, I think, has an influence with her. I shall expect you at about a quarter to eleven. I shall be sure to be there about then, and so shall my friend. Good-bye, till then."

And without giving him time to answer, and with a very kind smile, she nodded, ran up the broad stairs, and disappeared.

CHAPTER XXXVII. THE BALL.

When Mr. Marston returned to the hall, he loitered a little in the cloak-room, he rambled through the building into the refreshment and waiting-rooms, wherever he thought it possible the beautiful girl who alone gave this trumpery scene its magical interest, might be.

He was a little late, and also a little dispirited. He began to fear that she might not appear again that night.

What a bore it was, his having, in such a mood, to look out Miss Max among the chaperons, and to be introduced to some insupportable person, girl or matron, he forgot which!

Here and there, as he made his way up

the room, a friendly voice among the men recognised him, and cried:

"I say! Is that you, Marston?" or, "What brings you here, Marston, old fellow?"

At length he caught a glimpse of Miss Medwyn, in high chat with his sister; then she was hidden again, as he slowly moved through the people; the band was braying and thundering now obstreperously from the gallery, and the stewards were clearing a space for the dancers.

And now, again, he saw Miss Medwyn, much nearer, and she advanced a step or two with her cheery smile to greet him. She said something pleasant to him, smiling and nodding toward his sister, who was busy at that moment, talking to old Lord Fondlebury. Mr. Marston did not hear Miss Medwyn's remark, for his attention was fixed by a figure standing near her, the outline of which bore a marked resemblance to the lady of whom he was thinking; her face was turned away; she was speaking to a tall, rather handsome young man, with good blue eyes, and light golden moustache.

Miss Medwyn tapped her gently, and the lady turned.

She was dressed, I am enabled to tell you, in "a pale blue tulle, with a very graceful panier, the whole dress looped and studded with pale maize roses." It was the work of the great Madame Meyer. All these particulars were duly set forth in the county paper.

She had diamond stars in her rich brown hair, diamond ear-rings, and a diamond necklace. These were remarkably large diamonds, and the effect of the whole costume was dazzling, rich, and elegant.

Old Mr. Tintern was a little pleasurably flushed and excited in the consciousness of having, in that room, such unparalleled brilliants under his wing.

She had turned about, at the touch of Miss Max's hand, with a regal flash, and as the old lady introduced Mr. Marston to Miss Vernon, he grew pale, and hesitated:

"I am introducing only a name, you see. You have known the lady some time," said Miss Max, smiling very cheerfully.

Maud looked beautiful as a princess in a fairy-tale; but in all her splendour, more good-natured, and somehow more simple, than ever.

She was smiling gently, and put out her hand a little, as it seemed, almost timidly.

He took it, and said something suitable, I suppose. Perhaps it seemed a little cold and constrained, contrasted, at least, with his talk at other times—happier times (were they?)—when he suspected nothing of her great name and fortunes.

Had he been trifled with? Had he been fooled? How did these ladies regard him?

These questions were quieted. Neither was capable of enjoying his strange mortification. Whatever had passed was in good faith. But however good-natured the masquerading, still the truth, now revealed, broke up and dissipated, with an indescribable shock, his more Quixotic, but in many respects happier, estimate of their relations.

What had become of his unavowed confidence in his rank and reversions? Here was no longer the poor and beautiful idol of a half-compassionating love.

Here was in fortune absolutely, and in pure patrician blood nearly, the highest lady in England. Despair was stealing over his sunny prospects. He began, in an expressive phrase, to feel very small. Being proud and sensitive, he was not only a little stunned, but wounded.

Something, however, must be said and proposed. It would not do to stand there doing nothing.

Accordingly, Mr. Marston asked Miss Vernon to dance. She had number one. Had she kept it for him? There was not a moment to lose. It was a quadrille, as is the inflexible practice at public balls.

They took their places in a set just forming, with Lady Helen de Flambeaux and Captain Vivian vis-à-vis. Mr. Marston recognised the tall young man with azure eyes and yellow moustache, to whom Miss Vernon had been talking.

The music was roaring over their heads, so that people could not in the least overhear their neighbours' talk.

"I have been very much surprised this evening," he said.

"And shocked," she added.

"No, Miss Vernon; amazed a little—dazzled."

"It is so odd a sensation, being ceremoniously introduced to an old friend," she remarked.

"It is, somehow, so like losing an old friend and finding only an acquaintance in exchange," he answered, "when first impressions, very much cherished, are proved to be illusions, and circumstances change so entirely. Everything becomes uncertain, and one grows melancholy—it is enough to make one suspicious."

"That is very tragical," laughed the young lady.

"Happy are those, say I, for whom life

is a holiday, and the world a toy—I mean the people who have a good deal of satire and very little compassion, who are not unkind, but very cold, who enjoy the comedy of life, and can even smile at its tragedy; they can afford to laugh when others suffer," said Mr. Marston. "It can be of no consequence to you, Miss Vernon, how the strange delusion I have—I don't deny it—in a measure practised on myself, affects me."

"Well, I hope it won't embitter you for ever, Mr. Marston; it is a comfort, at all events, it has not made you give up dancing."

At this interesting moment Mr. Marston was obliged to advance and retreat, cross over, and all the rest; and when he had set to his partner, and turned that splendid lady about, it devolved on her to execute the same manœuvres with handsome Captain Vivian for vis-à-vis.

The next subject was not so interesting.

"I don't think our Wymering friends have done all they might for the floor," she remarked.

To which he made suitable answer, and artfully endeavoured to lead back the conversation into more interesting channels.

But Miss Vernon held him fast during the remainder of the quadrille to the decorations, the music, the room, and the other details, and he began to think it was all over with him, and with his hopes, and that he had had his last serious talk with Miss Vernon.

"When this is over," he thought, "she will ask me to take her back to the Tinterns, and leave her again with Miss Max, and so she will take a friendly leave, and I shall have a theme to think of for the rest of my life."

But he was mistaken. Miss Vernon, when the dance was over, said:

"Would you mind, Mr. Marston, taking me to the tea-room? I have not had any yet."

Very happy this little reprieve made him.

How the light touch of her hand upon his arm thrilled him as he led her in!

"What dances can you give me? Surely you can give me one?" he asked, imploringly, as they went along.

"I could give you a great many," said the young lady, gently; "but I don't mean to give you one more."

Mr. Marston stared.

"You must not think me very unkind. I might have said I have not one to give—not one—earlier than number twelve, and long before that we shall be on our way home to Roydon. But I mean to be very honest to-night; and if we can find a quiet place at the table in the tea-room, we can talk a little there."

"I half dread that little talk, Miss Vernon. Some people have more power of inflicting pain than they perhaps suspect. I scarcely think that can be your case; but—don't—I think I may ask that; don't, I entreat, say anything that may give me very great pain to-night. Give me an opportunity of speaking first. I hope that is not a very unreasonable petition."

He spoke very low and gently, but very earnestly.

"What a crowd!" said Miss Vernon, as if she had not heard a word.

As they slowly made their way, many an admiring, and many an envious eye was directed on that princess, and many a curious one upon the handsome young gentleman on whose arm her hand was lightly placed. She continued: "This is the best ball we have had at Wymering for two years. It is my third. I begin to feel very old."

"Eh? Hollo! Hi! How d'ye do, Miss Vernon?" bawled old Sir John Martingale, of Whistlewhips, short and square, pulling up and blocking half the passage, with his wife on one arm and his elderly daughter, Arabella, on the other, with both of whom Miss Vernon had to exchange greetings. "You're not turning your back on the dancers so soon, eh?"

His shrewd little grey eyes that lighted up his mulberry-coloured features, were scrutinising Mr. Marston with very little disguise.

"Oh, tea is it? And right good tea it is, I can tell you. Old Mother Vaneil in the High-street here, the confectioner, is doing the refreshments this time. And I have just been telling Lady Martingale, I han't got so good a cup o' tea this twel'month."

"Don't mind him, Miss Vernon. We treat him a great deal too well, and he's always grumbling," interposed Lady Martingale, "half joke, and whole earnest," as the good old phrase is.

Here Miss Martingale, who had been secretly squeezing and plucking at his arm, having secured, half an hour before, an eligible old bachelor, Mr. Plimbey, of Cowslip Meads, for number two, prevailed, and Sir John, with a jocular "I won't stand no more of your rubbish for breakfast, mind ye, my lady," and a wink at Miss Vernon, in which Mr. Marston, though a stranger,

was included, pulled his women through, as he phrases it, with a boisterous chuckle, interrupted, alas! soon by a fit of coughing.

By this time Mr. Marston had led Miss Vernon to the long tea-table, that, like a counter, traversed one end of the tea-room, and at an unfrequented part of this they took their stand, and he called for a cup of tea for the young lady.

CHAPTER XXXVIII. A MAN WITH A SQUARE BLACK BEARD.

THERE are few loiterers left in the room; the distant roar of the band accounts for this desertion. The damsel who administers tea to them is stricken in years, thin, and anxious with the cares of boiling kettles behind the scenes, and many tea-pots, and sponge and plum-cakes, and soup and ices, in immediate perspective. She has not a thought for other people's business, and is the most convenient possible attendant upon two people who have anything of the slightest interest to say to one another.

"Yes, it is very nice tea," says the young lady; "and, I forgot, I promised this dance to Mr. Dacre. I suppose I'm in disgrace, but I can't help it." She glances up at the cornice, and thinks for a moment. "I want you, Mr. Marston," she says, more gravely, and her diamonds make a great flash as she lowers her head, "to remember this: that if we are to continue to be good friends, you must never be offended at anything I do, or ever ask the meaning of it."

Marston laughs. It is a pained laugh she thinks.

"You can't suppose me so unreasonable," he says. "I know, perfectly, I have not the least right to ask a question, far less to be offended. In fact, you can hardly feel, more than I do, how very little claim an acquaintance, founded in so much ignorance and misapprehension, can give me to more than, perhaps, a very slight recognition."

"Well, I don't quite agree with you, Mr. Marston; I think, on the contrary, that I know you a great deal better than I possibly could have known you under ordinary circumstances in so short a time; and I think we ought to be better friends—I think we are better friends—for that very reason."

That was the sweetest music he ever heard in his life, and he could not answer immediately. It seemed to him, as she spoke, that her colour was a little heightened, and, for a moment, a strange, soft fire in her eyes. But was this real, or only one of those illusions which, before the gaze of devout enthusiasts, have, in a moment of ecstasy, lighted up sad portraits with smiles, or crossed their beauty with a shade of sorrow?

The next moment she looked just as usual.

"I saw my sister for a few minutes in the cloak-room," he says, suddenly, "and she told me that she had asked Miss Vernon to her house in Warwickshire. It did not interest me, for I little knew, then, who Miss Vernon really was. Do you think you will go to her?"

"I hope I shall—that is, if I can, I certainly will. Miss Medwyn is going, I believe, and I could go with her; but I don't know yet what mamma will say to it; and mamma is the only person living who can prevent my doing exactly what I please."

"But Lady Vernon, I hope, won't dream of preventing it?" he says, very anxiously.

"Mamma decides for herself in all things, and acts very strictly according to her ideas of duty, and sometimes thinks things that appear to me of no importance whatever, very important indeed; and you know that there has been some—something very like a quarrel—and Lord Warhampton doesn't like her, and I'm afraid mamma doesn't like him—and I really don't know whether that might not make a difficulty in her allowing me to go to Lady Mardykes; but a few days will decide."

"Heaven grant it may be favourably," murmurs the young man, vehemently.

"And you have asked me to say nothing to-night that could give you pain," says the young lady, referring to a speech that she had not before noticed, "and I, in return, exact the same promise from you. You must say nothing that may make us part worse friends than we were when we met."

"And I have so much to tell you, that is, ever so much to say; and, oh! how I hope you will not refuse my sister's invitation."

"I like her so very much," says the young lady. "And this dance will soon be over. You must take me now to Miss Medwyn—she is with the Tinterns—and remember, I have a reason for everything I do, although you may not understand it. You are not to speak to me again to-night, when you have taken me back to the Tinterns."

"Then," says Mr. Marston, with a look of sadness, almost reproach, "I am to take my leave in something worse than uncertainty?"

"Uncertainty?" with a half angry, half

startled glance, the girl repeats, but in the moment that follows the haughty fire of her fine eyes is quenched, and she places her fingers lightly on his arm, and says: "Shall we come now? I'm afraid the passage will soon be crowded. Let us come before the dance is over."

As they pass together toward the great room where the dancers, gentle and simple, townsfolk and rural, skilled and clumsy, were all whisking and whirling their best, to the inspiring thunder of the band, she repeats:

"You understand? You are not to speak to me, or look at me, or come near where I am again to-night—not in the cloak-room, not anywhere—and you must leave me the moment you place me beside my cousin Maximilla. I should not like you to think me capricious or silly," she adds, a little sadly, he fancies. "So, as a proof of your friendship, I ask you to believe that I have good reasons for what I ask. No, not this door; let us come in by the other. Good-night," she almost whispers, as they reach Miss Medwyn's side.

That lady was standing a little behind Mr. Tintern and Lady Mardykes, and the door by which they entered brought Miss Vernon beside her cousin, without passing before the other figures in this group.

"Good-night," she repeated, a little hurriedly.

"God bless you," he said, very low, holding in his the hand she had given him, longer than he ever had held it before, "and come what may I will see you very soon again."

"Well, dear, you have been to the tea-room?" said Miss Max, greeting her young cousin with a smile; "and where is Mr. — wasn't it Mr. Marston who took you?"

"Yes; I think he's gone," said the young lady.

Miss Max was looking round to find him, but he had left by the door through which they had just entered.

"He has vanished," she continued, "but of course he'll turn up again."

"Who is that man with the black beard, and large eyes, and solemn, pale face, who is talking to Lady Mardykes?" asked Maud, after a silence of a minute or two.

"I don't know; rather a remarkable face, clever, I think," answered Miss Max; "she knows every one that is worth knowing. Her house is quite delightful. Warhampton having held office so often, and only awaiting the next division, they say, to be in again. She knows all the clever people of her party, in both Houses, and the foreign ministers, and all the people distinguished for talent. I do so hope Barbara will let you go to her."

The grave man with the black beard now made his bow and smile, and turned away and disappeared in the crowd, and before Maud had time to ask Lady Mardykes who he was, Captain Vivian appeared to claim number three, promised to him.

Marston did not dance this, nor the next, and he saw Miss Vernon give both dances to the handsome young man with blue eyes and golden moustache, whom he had seen in conversation with her at the beginning of the evening.

"Fine girl, Miss Vernon, Miss Vernon of Roydon, you know; that's she with the diamonds, and devilish good diamonds they are," said Marston's schoolfellow, Tom Tewkesbury, who, after an absence of five years was just what he always was, only a little fonder of his bottle, "by Jove she is; positively lovely, by Jove! Don't you think so? I do. I wonder who that fellow is she's dancing with—not a bad-looking fellow. I say, Marston, I wonder whether a fellow would have any chance of getting a dance from her? By Jove! They are going it. Do you think it's a case? I've a great mind to go and try. She's with the Tinterns. Shall I? What do you say?"

"You had better be quick. She's not likely to remain long standing," said Marston, who was not sorry, in his present mood, to lose his friend's agreeable conversation.

Marston shifted his point of observation to see more distinctly how Mr. Tewkesbury fared.

That gentleman had made his way by this time to Mr. Tintern.

"Here I am—come to ask a favour," he said, taking a button of Mr. Tintern's coat, and looking persuasively in his face. "I want Miss Vernon to give me a dance, and you must introduce me. Do."

Tewkesbury has more than twelve thousand a year, represents an old county family, is a popular man, and not the kind of fellow to excite a romance. He is just the person whom Mr. Tintern would have chosen to dance with the heiress of Roydon. But he said, with a very amused chuckle:

"I'll introduce you with pleasure. Certainly, if you wish it; but I've just done the same thing for Lord Hawkshawe, and

she had not a dance. I don't know. I'll introduce you with pleasure."

Perhaps Tom Tewkesbury thought that he could afford in this game to give Lord Hawkshawe, who was fifty, and had a couple of thousand a year less than he, some points, and was not very much daunted by the report of the nobleman's failure.

Did he succeed? Alas! no. She was again carried off by the victorious Captain Vivian; and she and he beheld Mr. Marston, who had seen this early enough to secure Miss Chevron, figuring in the next set to theirs. There he was chasséeing, for it was a quadrille, and setting to that young lady, and turning her about, looking the while black as thunder.

His eyes stole, in spite of his resolution, now and then, in the direction of Miss Vernon. Once he thought their eyes met; but he could not be certain, for hers betrayed not the slightest sign of consciousness, and no more shrank or turned aside than the gleam of her brilliants.

And now, the dance ended, Miss Vernon returned to the Tinterns, and said a word to Miss Max, and Captain Vivian led her away to the refreshment-room where people were sipping soup or eating ices.

There they loiter. The next dance has begun. She does not intend to dance it. She has refused it to half a dozen distinguished competitors. Every one is inquiring who that fellow with the yellow moustache is, and no one seems to know exactly. He is by no means popular among the aspiring youth of Wymering.

The dance is nearly over by the time they return to Miss Medwyn, and the shadow of Mr. Tintern's protection.

The youth of the county, with here and there a sprinkling of middle age, are dancing number seven, and are pretty well on in it, when Miss Vernon resolves to take wing, and drive home to Roydon under the care of Maximilla Medwyn.

She has taken leave of the Tinterns and Lady Mardykes. The devoted Captain Vivian attends to put on her cloak and sees her into her carriage, with a last word, and a smile, and a good-night to Miss Max.

Miss Max yawns, and leans back. Miss Vernon does not yawn, but she looks tired, and leans back also, no longer smiling, listlessly in her corner.

"Home," says the young lady to the footman at the window.

With the high-blooded trotters of Roydon, the carriage rolls swiftly through the High-street, and in a few minutes more is gliding through old hedge-rows in the soft moonlight, among misty meadows and silent farm-steads.

SUNDAY IN THE SEVEN DIALS.

The week-day aspect of the Seven Dials must be tolerably familiar to all who have ever had occasion to make a short cut from Charing-cross to New Oxford-street. In order to accomplish this, they are bound to traverse the locality in question. Its main characteristics may be summed up as narrow streets, dingy houses, and dingier inhabitants; men whose sole occupation in life appears to consist in loafing about, pipe in mouth, slatternly women, and squalid children. Every object, both animate and inanimate, seems to have been toned down by dirt to one common neutral tint, and the very names on the street corners are utterly illegible from the smoke and grime with which the houses are thickly coated. There is an all-pervading air of dowdiness; a decidedly depressing atmosphere, the effects of which are to be seen in the slouching shuffle forming the habitual gait of the natives, and a generally dead-alive appearance, from which, however, the place wakes up to some extent in the evening.

But it is on Sunday morning, between the hours of eleven and one, that the Dials will best repay the trouble of a visit. Let the intending visitor, however, bear in mind that it is best at Rome to follow the example of the Romans, and so avoid shocking the susceptibilities of the Dialians by a too recherché costume; otherwise, he must expect, if he loiters about the neighbourhood, to run a gauntlet of criticism upon his personal appearance. For, as the male population have nothing to occupy their time till the public-houses are open, the majority pass the morning in languidly observing all that goes on around them, and in passing thereon remarks, more free than flattering. The writer found a pilot-jacket, a pair of horsy trousers, and a slouch cap, serve his purpose of mixing unnoticed in the crowd, admirably, and he was only once discussed seriously by a group of loungers, who hesitated whether to set him down as a Prussian or a pugilist.

Let us then suppose the intending visitor, duly equipped, to have threaded St. Martin's-lane. Passing Aldridge's, he will find himself at the bottom of Great St. Andrew-street, which will take him direct to the Dials. And here let me remark that I have

written "In the Seven Dials" at the head of this article, in deference to the common rule of speaking, but had I been studying the feelings of the inhabitants, I should have slightly altered my title. For a denizen of the locality, when asked to name his place of residence, will invariably reply, not that he lives "in," but "on," the Dials.

Seven Dials proper, though the name is used to designate the whole surrounding district, is an open space formed by the junction of seven streets. To two of these notice is directed. The one, Great St. Andrew-street, is blocked up by a crowd exclusively masculine; the other, Earl-street, is almost impassable, owing to a predominance of the feminine element. Place aux dames. Let us devote our attention to Earl-street.

Here is an open-air market doing a thriving trade, just as if acts of parliament prohibiting Sunday trading had never been heard of. The staple commodity of this market appears to be cabbages. Four-fifths of the shops in the street are kept by greengrocers, and their windowless fronts are heaped up high with cabbages. Huge baskets of the same useful vegetables are ranged all along the curbstone, and a flying brigade of venders, whose stock-in-trade consists of a couple of savoys or half a dozen heads of broccoli, are darting about in all directions, and pertinaciously thrusting their wares into the faces of passers-by, accompanying this action by a most energetic appeal to purchase. In the matter of noise the stationary dealers are by no means behind their perambulating compeers, and their reiterated announcement that "Now is the time, ladies," their continued vociferations of "Here's yer fine cabbagees," and their gratuitously volunteered information that potatoes are selling at the rate of "four puns for tuppence ha'penny," are absolutely deafening. Besides the greengrocers, there are bakers, with a gigantic seven displayed in their windows to indicate the price of the quartern loaf. There is not much doing in the staff of life just now. Neither are the numerous fish-shops, which exhibit piles of dried haddocks and smoked mackerel, bushels of shrimps, cockles, and periwinkles, and boxes of red-herrings; nor the cheesemongers with their prime Wiltshire bacon, displaying its alternate streaks of leather and lard, their best Dorset butter at fourteenpence, and their eggs (warranted) at sixteen a shilling; nor the milk-shop, which is also a pork butcher's, attracting much custom. For Seven Dials bought its daily bread when it purchased its ha'porth of milk, its bloater, or its rasher for breakfast some hours ago. Still the baker has the best of reasons for keeping his shutters down this morning, for is it not Sunday, and has not the Sunday's dinner to be consigned to his care and oven? Solemnly, as though bearing a sacrifice to the altar, a long file of men, women, and children pass through his portal laden with the repast in question. A bit of meat perched upon an iron trivet over a brown earthenware baking-dish, half of which contains potatoes, and the other half a batter-like compound, representing in the lively fancy of the Dialians, Yorkshire pudding, appears to be the staple dish, though it is sometimes replaced or supplemented by a pie.

But these are not the only shops; there are sweetstuff-shops, and tobacconists, and crockery-shops with rows of blue dishes and yellow jugs, and ironmongers, open presumably in expectation of any one having bought the materials for a more sumptuous repast than usual, and finding himself or herself without the necessary utensils to cook it. Then there are stationers whose windows offer especial attractions, adorned as they are with the last number of the latest sensational publication, and grocers where you may be supplied with "The People's Tea" at two shillings, or superior souchong at half a crown, to be sweetened with moist sugar at threepence per pound, or varied by coffee sold at the rate of two ounces for three halfpence, the rest of the stock-in-trade consisting seemingly of stick liquorice and sweet biscuits. And there are butchers. Not many of them, though, for the great meat mart of the neighbourhood is just a stone's throw off in Newport Market, and there is a constant stream going and coming from that direction. Still there are one or two butchers here who cater indifferently for the human and for the canine and feline races, displaying upon the same board the sheeps' heads, the tripe, the dark-coloured lumps of liver, and the pigs' feet intended for the former, and the neatly skewered rolls of paunch and bits of horseflesh destined for the two latter. There are also pork butchers with their legs and loins of huge coarse-rinded pigs' meat, their black and pease-puddings, their savoury fagots, small Germans, and long strings of unsavoury abominations playfully called sausages, into the composition of which it is not for us, but rather for the sanitary inspector, to pry closely. And doing one of the best businesses in the market, despite the coolness of an early

spring day, is a ginger-beer shop. The Dialians are thirsty souls, and one o'clock, that blissful hour when a tyrannical legislature permits a man to refresh himself, is yet far off. So, in the meanwhile, they gulp down tumblers of foaming pop, and sometimes even venture as high as twopence in the purchase of soda water.

However, the shopkeepers are not alone in the receipt of custom. Besides the perambulating dealers in cabbages already referred to, there are others upon the ground. The police do not permit barrows to be drawn up here on Sunday morning, but they tolerate baskets; and so baskets of vegetables, of fish, and of crockery are ranged along both sides of the roadway, with the owners bawling encomiums of their wares, whilst boys and girls with pennyworths of onions, bunches of carrots, handfuls of greens, and cheap Sunday newspapers, add their shrill trebles to the concert. Numerous merchants of unconsidered trifles, such as sweetmeats, cakes, gingerbread nuts, toys, combs, hair-nets, boot and stay-laces, braces, tin-ware, gridirons, chickweed, groundsel, flowers, roots, &c., are also strolling up and down, and adding to the din. There are also flower-sellers, but they receive but scant patronage. The inhabitants of the Dials, and it is a bad sign, do not appreciate bouquets, and I fear the dandiest of them all would hardly venture to sport a rosebud or a "bunch o' vilets" in his button-hole.

The customers are all women and girls, and the former are all equally dowdy and frouzy. Whatever may have been the original colour of their garments, time, wear, and dirt have toned them down to pretty well the same dingy hue, and even the few faded flowers in their battered bonnets fail to relieve the sombre monotony. There is no particularising their attire, and their faces, too, are equally pinched, haggard, and careworn. They are keen and quiet bargainers, and silently and carefully turn over the piles of vegetables, or lift and sniff at the fish, quite indifferent to the smart salesman who is rattling off his invitations to purchase in their very ears. Some, indeed, have come back to resume a bargain all but concluded last night, in the hopes of now obtaining the article over which they chaffered a few halfpence cheaper, but with the majority it is a different story. They were unable to do their Saturday's marketing, for "father" did not come reeling home till the last public-house was closed, and now, whilst he is still lying in a drunken stupor upon the bed at home, they have sallied forth with whatever they found left in his pockets, in search of a Sunday's dinner. And when two of them who are acquaintances meet, they generally come to a dead stop in the midst of the crowd to indulge in a quiet gossip, such as women delight in, frequently having reference to the state in which "he" came home last night. The girls are a little smarter. Some of them have washed their faces, presumably in honour of the day, and, furthermore, adorned themselves with strings of glass beads and gilt ear-rings. They have either run out to buy something forgotten by "mother" last evening, or to indulge on their own account in an illustrated periodical of fiction, which they unfold in the streets, and read as they walk along, often in pairs, with their arms around each other. This style is exceedingly popular amongst the poorer of them, who habitually dispense with bonnets, because then one shawl can be made available for two wearers.

The surrounding streets offer no slight contrast. Here quiet prevails. Nine-tenths of the shops in Dudley-street are devoted to the sale and purchase of second-hand garments. Like the poet's bedstead, they contrive to pay a double debt, for whilst the dealer in old clothes occupies the shop itself, the cellar beneath it is tenanted by a vender of old boots and shoes, whose stock-in-trade, polished to a wonderful degree of brightness, is ranged in shining and symmetrical rows along the pavement. Boots of all kinds, from the navvy's ankle-jack to the child's shoe, from the mechanic's blucher to the lady's balmoral, all equally glittering, are to be had here. And not without reason have they been so polished; for a lavish application of the blacking-brush goes far to conceal all the cunning devices of heelball and brown paper, which have helped to restore them apparently to their pristine solidity. Avoid them, for they are Dead Sea fruit; fair to look at, but rotten at the core. Purchase a pair, and you will behold them at the first shower of rain collapse into a shapeless, sodden mass. The old clothes are mostly women's, and bear so close a resemblance to those you see worn in the streets, that you have no reason to wonder where they come from. Very remarkable are the general odd-and-end shops to be found in these streets, in which you may purchase almost every conceivable thing in a more or less dilapidated and imperfect condition, and which appear to be doing a very good

business just now, though it certainly does puzzle one to guess what a man can possibly want with a concertina, minus all its keys, half a dozen yards of tarnished gilt cornice, three-fifths of a pair of scales, an odd carriage lamp, or the upper half of a bagatelle board, on a Sunday morning. There are second-hand furniture-shops, which run into the old iron trade, and also branch out into the picture line. Pictures, indeed, are plentiful about here, both sacred and secular, including a number of saints for the Irish, who, however, are far from being so numerous in this neighbourhood as of old, and a liberal sprinkling of royal personages for the patriotic.

These quiet streets are favoured by the juvenile denizens of the Dials, since here they can indulge in their sports and pastimes without fear of interruption. Some, in clean pinafores, with their hair brushed and faces shining from the recent application of yellow soap, are sitting on the doorsteps, sucking sticky sweetstuff, or munching big lumps of bread-and-dripping, given them to amuse them till the joint comes home from the baker's, or are wandering about, hand-in-hand, in family groups of four or five. Others, and by far the majority, in their natural unkempt state, are playing at battledore and shuttlecock, a game fashionable in the Dials at this season of the year, for amongst London children certain games succeed each other in regular and mystic relation, and hopscotch has just gone out. The only spectators are lounging bachelors, who stand in the doorways, four or five deep, in their shirt-sleeves, looking on.

The upper half of Great St. Andrew-street is the Sunday morning lounge of the natives of the Dials, and if there were any rank and fashion to be found in the neighbourhood, the visitor might expect to find them here. The speciality of Great St. Andrew-street, as any one who has ever passed down it cannot fail to be aware, is birds, and it is to look at, examine, admire, criticise, and even buy the speciality in question, that this crowd is congregated here. Every bird-shop has its circle of spectators, devouring the contents of the window with their eyes. There is only one exception, and that is the establishment on the east side of the street, which on week days makes such a brilliant exhibition of frogs, snakes, lizards, newts, tortoises, gold-fish, and sticklebacks. Whether the proprietor is afraid that these creatures are not sufficiently strong in constitution to bear being stared at, or whether he fears they are even too attractive, and might draw the entire crowd in front of his window, and so block up the street, I am unable to say, but it is certain that on Sundays he withdraws the glass cases containing his finny and scaly wares into the darkest recesses of his shop, leaving nothing in their place but a few weakly-looking ferns, a stuffed bird or two, and some bundles of porcupines' quills. But there is no lack of attractions left, seeing that, with the exception of a couple of hatters, a herbalist, a sweetmeat-shop, and a picture-frame maker, the street presents on either side a long line of aviaries, the windows of which are filled from top to bottom with cages. Canaries form the majority of the occupants of these miniature prisons, but linnets and finches are to be met with in considerable numbers, and there are larks and starlings, blackbirds and thrushes, love-birds, paraquets, and even sparrows. Yes, not only the Java, but the common sparrow is to be found here, and the London Arab, as I observed, devotes twopence to his acquisition, but whether to rear him, to eat him, or to pelt him to death down "our court," I cannot say. Nor are singing birds the only creatures exposed for sale here. There are parrots and cockatoos, jays and magpies, jackdaws and ravens, fowls of every breed, pigeons, rabbits, and a perfect host of such small deer as guinea-pigs, white mice, dormice, hedgehogs, squirrels, and ferrets. The cages offer almost as much variety as their tenants. There are long low hutches, each containing a regiment of the rank and file of canaries, marked for sale at six shillings per cock, and two per hen bird. There are smaller habitations of brown wood and steel wire, set apart for approved songsters of the same tribe, and eligible family residences, with inner chambers, and sliding partitions, and little fluffy nests, for the accommodation of such birds as may be matrimonially disposed. There are little green boxes, with wooden bars, for the linnets and finches, white wicker baskets for blackbirds, elegant little domes of blue and silver, or green and gold, for love-birds, and gorgeous pagoda-like constructions, of bright steel or gilt wire, for the parrots and cockatoos. And not for birds alone are residences provided, for there are tiny dog-kennels, and hutches, and cages, for white mice and squirrels, together with such miscellaneous odds and ends as dog-collars, muzzles, bells, seed-troughs, water-bottles, bird-baths, nests, &c. And every time the sun peeps through the clouds the burst of sunlight calls forth a

corresponding burst of bird-song, whilst flocks of circling pigeons, whirling up amongst chimney-pots above, join in the salute.

The crowd is essentially a loafing one, and the members of it present a strong family resemblance to each other. There are attempts at smartness in the matter of dress on the part of individuals, but they only serve to render the seediness of the mass more apparent. For the people assembled here between eleven o'clock and noon are almost all inhabitants of the quarter. Some have come out to purchase a turf, or some bird-seed, or a handful of groundsel or chickweed from the basket-bearing dealers, for the bird at home; and there are boys with cages for sale, but the vast bulk have not even such a reason as that for their presence here. They loaf about listlessly, for their object is merely to kill time till the public-houses open, and they find it hard work to accomplish this feat. There was, however, when I visited the Dials on Sunday, one old man who had an object. This was a long-bearded individual in a snuff-coloured great-coat, who was distributing tracts. He was a brisk, cheerful old man, for when a Frenchman, to whom he offered one of his little books, politely declined it, with the remark, in his native language, that he did not understand English, the old fellow observed to those around him, "Ah, non comprong, poor fellow; it ain't his fault that he's a Frenchman; the Lord 'll look after him just the same!"

The slightest incident attracts as many spectators as a fight or an accident would upon ordinary occasions, and is eagerly welcomed as relieving the monotony. A boy, for instance, after looking and hesitating for a long time, at length makes up his mind to purchase a bird. He plunges into the shop, and is at once followed by a dozen companions, all eager to tender their advice upon this important matter. He comes out, grasping his acquisition as tightly as if he expected it to fly away, cage and all, and becomes at once a centre of attraction. Grave men cluster around him, ask how much he paid for his treasure, and solemnly counsel him as to the future diet of his purchase. Many of the men themselves have dogs under their arms, and friends assemble round them to discuss the animals' points, bystanders quietly joining in the conversation. I do not notice many birds bought, and the depressing influence of the Dials seems to overspread everything, for there is an entire absence of chaff or horse-play.

Towards noon costermongers' barrows laden with nuts, oranges, cocoa-nuts, and ginger-beer, began to make their appearance, and were extensively patronised. Periwinkles, too, found great favour in the eyes of the multitude, for it takes some time to get through half a pint of these delicacies, and with that quantity in your pocket, a good store of pins, and a comfortable post to lean against, you can while away half an hour or so pleasantly and imperceptibly. A fondness for leaning against posts is, by the way, one of the distinguishing characteristics of the natives of this district, and one which they appear to have inherited from the Irish, who preceded them in their occupancy. For amongst the things not generally known may be classed the fact that the Irish element, as I have already hinted, has almost entirely disappeared from the region of the Dials, and I have not heard the brogue once this morning, though I can remember when you could not have passed down here on a Sunday morning, without noticing a dozen posts supporting stalwart Hibernians in the full national gala costume of steeple-crowned hat, swallow-tail coat, knee-cords, and blue stockings.

As one o'clock draws near the crowd in Great St. Andrew-street begins to lose its local character from the increasing stream of traffic pouring through the street. The constant passage of soldiers, clerks, shop-girls, and holiday makers generally, soon tones down the peculiar features of the thoroughfare.

The aborigines now begin to concentrate their forces upon the Dials themselves. Two of the seven corners at this spot are occupied by public-houses, and towards the clock imbedded in the façade of one of these establishments many anxious looks are now cast. The market is by this time over, and the loungers at the doorways have burst from the grub into the butterfly state, and sallied forth in all the glories of slangy swelldom, their clothes cut according to the inflexible mathematics of the ready-made system. There are gorgeous exceptions to the general mob, but there is one fact in connexion with the entire multitude which is rather remarkable. However seedy and shabby a Dialian may be in his attire, his boots, or what is left of them, are invariably polished to perfection on a Sunday morning. One side of the open space is occupied by a row of a dozen shoeblacks, who indulge amongst themselves in the playful badinage peculiar to their tribe, whilst attending to the wants of their

customers. These latter have by this time pretty well exhausted the round of amusement afforded by the place. They have been shaved, for the penny barber close by has been hard at work, scraping away the week's growth of stubble, all the morning; they have looked at all the birds, they have drunk ginger-beer, and eaten oranges and periwinkles, and now, as a last resource, they are having their boots cleaned. I verily believe that some of them go away, rub off the polish, and then come back and have the operation repeated, merely for the sake of killing time. Happy are those who can read. For their delectation comes a swarm of newsboys bellowing at the top of their voices the titles of the journals they have for disposal and their contents. A few genuine working men, mechanics in their white slops, and navvies in moleskin and corduroy, now make their appearance, for, to tell the truth, the Dials is not a working-class neighbourhood, and women and children with jugs in their hands assemble on the outskirts of the crowd, now every moment growing denser and denser, and fall to gossiping after the manner of their kind. As to the men, they are getting too anxious to talk, and puff their tobacco in silence, whilst some of the lads vent their impatience in softly whistling breakdowns, and keeping time to them in a shuffling hop upon the pavement. The excitement intensifies, and all eyes are rivetted upon the dial-plate in front of the Crown, all ears are straining to catch the notes of One from the belfry of St. Giles's. Now, ding-dong, ding-dong, ding-dong, ding-dong, dong! and as the last welcome sound dies away, there is a creaking in front, a bolt is heard to shoot, and then, like one mighty wave, the crowd surges through the opened door to break against the bar. In two minutes they have vanished. That mass of human beings has melted like snow before the sun, and has been swallowed up by the gaping jaws of the public-house.

NEWS TO TELL.

Neighbour, lend me your arm for I am not well,
This wound you see is scarcely a fortnight old.
All for a sorry message I had to tell,
I've travelled many a mile in wet and cold.

Yon is the old grey château above the trees,
He bade me seek it, my comrade brave and gay;
Stately forest and river so brown and broad,
He showed me the scene as he a-dying lay.

I have been there, and, neighbour, I am not well;
I bore his sword and some of his curling hair,
Knocked at the gate and said I had news to tell,
Entered a chamber and saw his mother there.

Tall and straight with the snows of age on her head,
Brave and stern as a soldier's mother might be,
Deep in her eyes a living look of the dead,
She grasped her staff and silently gazed at me.

I thought I'd better be dead than meet her eye;
She guessed it all, I'd never a word to tell.
Taking the sword in her arms she heaved a sigh,
Clasping the curl in her hand she sobbed, and fell.

I raised her up, she sate in her stately chair,
Her face like death, but not a tear in her eye;
We heard a step, and tender voice on the stair
Murmuring soft to an infant's cooing cry.

My lady she sate erect, and sterner grew,
Finger on mouth she motioned me not to stay;
A girl came in, the wife of the dead I knew,
She held his babe, and, neighbour, I fled away!

I tried to run, but I heard the widow's cry.
Neighbour, I have been hurt and I am not well:
I pray to God that never until I die,
May I again have such sorry news to tell!

THE THREE-EYED MAN OF CYPRUS.

"It comes to the Forty Thieves, after all," murmured Rupert, at the end of a pause, during which he had been quietly smoking an elaborately adorned meerschaum, and staring at the fire.

"A great many things come to thieves, and thieves come for a great many things," observed Adolphus, "but what particular booty falls to the lot of the renowned Forty?"

"Perhaps you are not aware," said Rupert, "that while modern philologists devote their energies to the comparison of various languages, and succeed in deriving from a common stock many hitherto supposed to have no connexion with each other, a similar process is adopted in the case of popular tales, and that it is ascertained beyond the possibility of doubt, that the same story, modified in its details, may frequently be found in countries separated by vast distances, between which no mutual intercourse can be proved. The tale of Cinderella, for instance, is to be found almost everywhere. Do you understand?"

"Perfectly," replied Adolphus; "but I fail to perceive that you have answered my question about the Forty Thieves."

"To those I was coming," said Rupert. "I have just been reading a popular tale of Cyprus, one of a collection published about two years ago in modern Greek, by M. Athenasios Sakellarios. Now, in the main, no two narratives can be more distinct than this tale and the familiar story of Ali Baba, but in one particular incident they meet, and, what is strange, this incident cannot be classed among what may be termed the commonplaces of fairy lore."

"Commonplaces of fairy lore? I do not

quite apprehend your meaning," remarked Adolphus.

"I can easily make myself clear by example," said Rupert. "Among fairy commonplaces I would class the frequent use of the number three. In tale after tale we find parents with three children, of which the third, if they are boys, is more clever, if they are girls, is more beautiful than the other two."

"Oh, yes," rejoined Adolphus, "in the good old days, when fairies were our godmothers, the third of three was the best as a matter of course. But tell me about this tale of Cyprus, which it seems is so much like and so much unlike the story of the Forty Thieves."

"Well," said Rupert, "it starts with a violation of the very rule which we have just laid down as general. A poor woodcutter had three daughters, and employed three asses to take his wood to market. His profits on a certain fine day being somewhat above the average, he purchased a kerchief of the kind that was used for head-gear, whereat the girls were greatly delighted, especially the eldest, who at once tied it about her head, and took her seat at the window, expecting to be admired by the passers-by. Nor was she disappointed; for she attracted the attention of a countryman, who was going along the street, and so highly was he pleased by her personal appearance, that he made inquiries among the neighbours whether she was married or single. The satisfactory result of his investigations led to a proposal of marriage, which was gladly accepted by the woodcutter, and the eldest daughter left her father's house, with a husband magnanimous enough to take no account of her poverty."

"But the other sisters, more especially the third——" Adolphus began to inquire.

"Are never mentioned again in the course of the story," said Rupert, finishing the sentence. "There is the very solecism to which I just now referred."

"You don't mean to say that, contrary to all precedent, this eldest girl will remain the principal female personage in the tale?"

"Yes, I do."

"Then it is very clear that the people of Cyprus never heard of Cinderella, however widely that lady's fame may be spread in other directions," remarked Adolphus.

"On the contrary," retorted Rupert, "they have a Cinderella of their own, in which the rule of three is rigidly observed, and which, in its way, is as ghastly a tale as any myth of Ancient Greece. An old woman has three daughters, the youngest of whom she loves far more than the others, who are thereby so much exasperated that they determine to put an end to their mother's life. They therefore decoy her into a spinning-match, the terms of which are, that the spinner whose thread breaks shall be devoured by the others. The poor old lady loses, and implores for mercy, which is granted; but when her thread breaks for the third time, further respite is denied, and they prepare to kill her. She contrives, however, to give a valuable hint to her youngest daughter, who took no part in the spinning-match. When she has been eaten up by her wicked children, Cinderella is to collect the bones, put them into a vessel, and smoke them, without intermission, for forty days. The old lady is duly boiled and eaten, Cinderella refusing to share in the impious repast, and taking care to obey her mother's mandate. She lights a great fire, places over it the vessels containing the bones, and for forty days keeps her place on the hearth, not quitting it for a moment. The sisters dress and go out, asking her to accompany them; but she prefers to remain at home. When the prescribed forty days have passed she opens the vessel in the absence of her sisters, and, lo! the bones are transformed to diamonds and gold. The rest of the story coincides with the Cinderella of our childhood. The two sisters go to a wedding-party, leaving Cinderella at home; but she presently follows them, magnificently attired, and attracts the notice of a prince, who is among the guests. When she hurries away she loses one of her slippers, which is found by the prince, who, of course, marries its owner. The nuptial ceremony being concluded, she pays a visit to her sisters, shows them the treasures in the vessels, explaining that these are their mother's transmuted bones, makes them a present of a portion, and takes the rest home to her royal husband's palace."

"Heyday!" exclaimed Adolphus; "so these two abominable wretches, not only kill and eat their mother, but are actually rewarded for the hideous crime. The moral of the story is atrocious."

"Your indignation is natural enough, if you regard the personages in this wild tale as mere ordinary mortals, occasionally subjected to supernatural influences, as in the common run of popular tales. The Cinderella of our youth and her two sisters are perfectly human, the godmother, as a wonder-working fairy, standing apart from all the rest. On the other hand, note the circumstances of the strange mother in the Cinde-

rella of Cyprus. She is not waylaid, but she voluntarily stakes her life on the result of a contest of skill with her daughters, who are more lenient than is required by the conditions of the game. Then, oddly enough, though she is hated by the elder daughters for the preference she shows to the youngest, they display no ill-feeling towards the latter. When they go out they ask her to accompany them, and her adherence to the hearth arises, not from any oppression on their part, but from her determination to perform a pious duty. Nor does the crime which they have committed inspire her with abhorrence. On the contrary, she presents them with a share of the wealth which she has acquired through their wickedness. The death of an old lady, whose bones are slowly but spontaneously converted into gold and precious stones, is, in my opinion, not to be judged by ordinary rules of right and wrong; but the main story is some sort of allegory, with which the tale of Cinderella and her slipper has been clumsily interwoven. Again, forty is not a number of frequent occurrence in fairy tales, and the fact that the days of Cinderella's watching correspond to the duration of Lent may be worth consideration."

"Likely enough," said Adolphus; "but we are forgetting the woodcutter's eldest daughter."

"True," rejoined Rupert. "Well, we'll return to her. The young lady was conducted by her husband to a splendid house, and presented with a key, which would open the doors of a hundred rooms. There was another room, which he told her was empty, and the door of which he forbade her to open. The key of this he retained."

"We are coming straight to Bluebeard," cried Adolphus, "and I suppose we are to be favoured with a museum of slaughtered wives."

"Nothing of the sort," said Rupert, "the resemblance of the tale to that of Bluebeard is very transient. There was actually nothing whatever in the room but a large coffer. The only object that arrested the young lady's gaze, when, in her husband's absence, having ascertained where the key was kept, she entered the forbidden precincts, was a window that looked upon the street. At this she took her post, and resigned herself to the contemplation of a dismal cemetery, to which a corpse was carried without the usual accompaniment of mourners. The sight suggested melancholy reflections. She felt that if she herself chanced to die, she would be in the same miserable predicament as that neglected body; for her husband had expressly ordered that none of her family should be allowed to visit her."

"Aha!" shouted Adolphus, with much delight, "that's the reason why we hear no more of the woodcutter's youngest daughter. Possibly she figures in another tale."

"Possibly," said Rupert, dryly; "but if there be such a tale, I have not read it. Well, the corpse having been duly buried, and the persons who carried it having retired, who should march up to the cemetery but the lady's husband. No sooner had he reached the grave than his head swelled to an enormous size, the number of his eyes increased from two to three, his hands became wonderfully long, and were decorated with nails of proportionate dimensions. With these he dug up the body, which he greedily devoured."

"There seems to be a great deal of cannibalism in the Cyprian consciousness," gravely observed Adolphus. "Two young women eat their mother, and a very ugly gentleman feasts on a newly-buried corpse. By the way, our three-eyed friend looks very like the old Ghoul in the Arabian Nights."

"Certainly he is a ghoul to all intents and purposes," said Rupert. "His appearance and conduct had such an effect upon his wife that she became violently ill, and took to her bed. Soon afterwards he returned home, entered the empty room, deposited the bones of the devoured body in the coffer, and noticed certain footprints which could not be his own. Shrewdly surmising the cause of this phenomenon, he went to his wife's bedside, and affectionately asked her what was the matter, whereat she was so greatly horrified that she plunged her head under the clothes, and declared that she was going to die. His offer, as kind as it was unexpected, to fetch her mother, was readily accepted; so slipping out of the room, he reappeared in the likeness of that excellent person."

"As the three-eyed ghoul seems able to assume any shape at pleasure, I wonder that he ever wears the hideous form at all," observed Adolphus.

"Probably if we were able to obtain the narrative in a more complete state," replied Rupert, "we should find that the horrible form with three eyes, and even the consumption of human flesh, was imposed upon our cannibal friend by a law of necessity, and was not the result of a depraved inclination. Remember, that in the tale of Puss

in Boots, the ogre, who is able to assume various shapes, remains an ogre notwithstanding. Well, the mother affectionately asked the young wife whether she had been maltreated by her husband. The invalid answered in the negative, whereupon her visitor suggested the propriety of sending a present home to her family. No, the wife would not touch the husband's property in his absence, but she promised to speak to him on the delicate subject when he returned home. Nothing could be more satisfactory than the result of the cross-examination; so when, after the retirement of the supposed old lady, our cannibal returned in his proper form——"

"Which form was that?" asked Adolphus.

"Why, of course, the form in which he married her," answered Rupert, peevishly. "You don't suppose he was such a fool as to let the cat out of the bag, by reappearing with his long nails and three eyes."

"I beg your pardon," said Adolphus, meekly; "I did not know whether the law of necessity to which you just now referred might not have come unexpectedly into operation. But go on."

"Well," proceeded Rupert, "when he reappeared he was apparently in a very good humour, and willingly consented to send a trifle to his wife's family. Indeed, as the sum she required did not greatly exceed twopence, he had the opportunity of reading her a kindly lecture on her scrupulous disposition, and of reminding her that she was the mistress of his house. All the wife's relations were now invited one by one, with the sole exception of her grandmother, and the forms of all were successively assumed by the husband, with a result as satisfactory as when he had put on the semblance of the mother. But when he made his appearance in the likeness of the grandmother, things took an unpleasant turn, for his wife, inspired by a confidence she had not before manifested, begged the venerable dame to sit down, and proceeded to describe in the fullest detail all the horrors she had witnessed from the window in the empty room. A howl of rage from her husband immediately followed the end of her narrative, and casting aside the semblance of the old lady, he stood revealed in all the hideousness belonging to what you call his proper form. His wife's inconsistency seemed to displease him even more than her inordinate curiosity. If she had been content to watch the proceedings in the cemetery, and had kept her knowledge to herself, he might, he said, have been disposed to leniency; but why in the world, when she had been so circumspect with all the rest of her kith and kin, should she be so provokingly communicative to her grandmother, no doubt, a garrulous old lady, more given to gossip than all the others put together? Such a combination of perverseness and absurdity demanded the severest punishment. So the offended husband kindled a huge fire, made a spit red-hot, and told his wife she must prepare to be roasted and eaten.

"The wife acknowledged the justice of the sentence," pursued Rupert, "but asked and obtained a respite of two hours for the ostensible purpose of making her peace with Heaven. No sooner was she out of her husband's sight than she armed herself with the key of the forbidden room, entered it, and leaped from the window."

"With a hundred and one rooms in his house, how excessively stupid the cannibal must have been that he could not find a nook where to hide his key!" objected Adolphus.

"Nay," replied Rupert, "there is an instance of a law which more or less prevails through the whole region of popular lore. The battle is always that of the strong against the weak, and the former, who is certain to be conquered, is generally overweighted with a load of stupidity which insures the victory of his antagonist. The young wife, knowing that her husband would be at any rate shrewd enough to follow her, ran down the street with all her might and main, till she came to a man with a waggon, who, when he had heard her case, said that he could not assist her, inasmuch as her three-eyed persecutor would not scruple to devour him and his horse. He advised her, therefore, to continue her flight till she reached the driver of the king's camels. This advice she took, and when the camel-driver was informed how matters stood, he took a bale of cotton from the back of his animal, and within it concealed the fugitive. In the meanwhile, the cannibal having reheated his spit, called for his wife at the expiration of the two hours, and receiving no answer, proceeded at once to the empty room, leaped out of window, and scampered down the street till he came up to the waggoner, who, threatened with immediate consumption unless he gave information respecting the runaway, protested utter ignorance, and referred him to the camel-driver. The latter, however, when overtaken, was so strong in his negatives that the three-eyed

persecutor turned back, and searched his house once more. The search proving fruitless, he armed himself with his spit, which he had again reheated, and once more overtook the driver of camels, whom he ordered to stop. The poor man, frightened out of his wits, but less frightened than the lady in the bale, obeyed the command, whereupon the monster thrust his spit into one bale after another, but took his departure when he saw that no result ensued. When he was fairly out of the way the worthy camel-driver naturally asked the lady if she had not been hurt by the spit, and learned that the point of the formidable weapon had entered her foot, but that she had had the presence of mind to wipe off the stains of blood with cotton."

"A strong-minded woman!" cried Adolphus, with admiration. "This incident of the bales of cotton and the spit is decidedly sensational."

"The young lady," proceeded Rupert, "was consoled by her protector's assurance that she was certain to be kindly received by the king, at whose palace they shortly arrived. By piling the other bales of cotton in the court-yard, and conveying the one which contained the lady into his own apartment, the driver caused the servants to suspect that he was committing a robbery, and he was accordingly brought before the king. This explanation, which was followed by the production of the young lady, perfectly satisfied the benevolent monarch, who having heard her story, ordered his physician to bandage her wounded foot. When she had recovered she expressed a desire to make herself useful, and having been provided with proper materials, embroidered so magnificent a portrait of the king seated on his throne, with his crown on his head, that every one was astounded. Nay, the king was of opinion that so expert an embroiderer, although not of royal descent, would make an admirable daughter-in-law, and his queen entirely agreed with him."

"Ah!" observed Adolphus, "whatever might have been the faults of those kings in fairy tales, they always encouraged talent."

"With the proposal that she should become the bride of the crown prince," continued Rupert, "she felt highly honoured, but at the same time perceived a difficulty."

"In the circumstance that she was already married?" suggested Adolphus.

"No," replied Rupert, "that was perfectly known to everybody. She feared that her first husband would no sooner hear of her second marriage, than he would contrive to eat her up, and her bridegroom into the bargain. She, therefore, counselled the king to have the nuptial ceremony performed at night-time, as quietly as possible, and also to build an upper story to the palace, that could only be approached by seven steps. At the foot of the lowest there was to be a large hole, concealed by a mat, and all the steps were to be smeared with tallow."

"The clown in a Christmas pantomime is familiar with the last stratagem," observed Adolphus, "but he usually employs butter."

"The attempt to keep the wedding a secret," proceeded Rupert, "proved, of course, a failure. The cannibal heard of the approaching marriage of his fugitive wife with the king's son, and immediately collected a number of black men, whom he hid in sacks, and with them proceeded to the royal castle, in the guise of a merchant. All the wedding-party had assembled at the supper-table, and the bride, detecting the unwelcome visitor, gave a hint to her royal mother that she should cause the traveller to be inquired as to the nature of his wares. His answer was to the effect that he had brought pistachio-nuts, dried apricots, and chestnuts, all of the finest quality; whereupon the bride expressed a strong desire to taste luxuries so delicious. He begged to be excused till the following morning; but the king's jester, anxious to oblige his young mistress, crept stealthily up to one of the sacks, with the design of pilfering a dainty, and was not a little astonished when a gruff voice inquired, 'Is it time, master?' Trying all the sacks in succession, the jester heard the same inquiry repeated, and lost no time in reporting his discovery to the guests in the banquet-hall. Perfectly understanding how matters stood, the bride gave orders that the merchant should be compelled to open his sacks immediately, and his speedy retreat at once ensued. The services of the public executioner were now required, and that useful functionary answering the successive inquiries in the affirmative, struck off each head as it was thrust from the sack."

"I see," exclaimed Adolphus, "there is the passage which connects your story with that of the Forty Thieves. Here, of course, we reach the conclusion, and have only to believe that the bride and bridegroom lived happy ever afterwards."

"Not quite so fast," replied Rupert. "The cannibal returned in his hideous form, and ascended to the upper story, in order to carry off the bride; but the spirited lady succeeded in tumbling him down the slippery stairs, and he fell into the hole, where he was immediately devoured by a couple of wild beasts. Now you may indulge in your blissful belief if you please. But of what are you thinking?"

"I am thinking," said Adolphus, "about our ancient friend Polyphemus, who had one eye in the middle of his forehead, fed upon human flesh, and made much use of a roasting-spit. Now, it seems to me that the monster of Cyprus is very like the monster of Sicily, with one eye in his forehead, not in lieu of, but in addition to, the ordinary two."

MY CENSUS PAPER.

I HAVE been at last recognised by the State. Officially, I mean, for in the matter of taxes, &c., any person, I believe, would be recognised, who was content to discharge its claims. But in the present case it will admit no substitute; it looks to me and to me only. Sir, I am the "Head of the Family!"

I have the blue census document now open before me, with its elaborate divisions and subdivisions, "members of this family, of visitors, and of all others who slept or abode in this dwelling on the night of Sunday, April the 2nd." I am proudly at the head of them all.

I approach the first column, where I find that nobody who was absent on the night of Sunday, April the 2nd, is to be entered in the column; excepting those who were travelling, or were out at work on that particular night. This seems to me rather finessing; no decent, well-ordered head of a house would allow any of his people to be out at work, or indeed any of his family that he cared for, to be travelling in the cold night air.

I had been away from home on business of importance, but during the whole time this great national enumeration was before my eyes. Inquisitorial, some called it; yet how important it was that every fact and figure should be recorded for our nation's good. I was eager to get back, and almost the first words I uttered, as my eldest girl ran to meet me, were, "Has the enumerator been here?" She did not know. Indeed, I could see that my rather sudden return had taken them by surprise. There was a young fellow called Tithebarn, who had been assiduously paying attentions to my Patty, and whom, on account of his irreverence as to all matters of business, I had forbidden the house. I had not time now to ask about him, for I saw the blue form on my desk. I trembled as I thought how close I had "run it." My wife treated the matter with a carelessness that really approached levity.

"Oh, there was no fear," she said. "I was near filling it in yesterday. I hear any sort of nonsense will do, provided you give them figures."

"Any nonsense!" I said, appalled. "Do you know what you are speaking of?"

"No!" she said, contemptuously, "nor do they know themselves. Collecting all the women's ages—how many nurses and cooks there are in a street. Mrs. Widgington's little girl, Polly, put them all down cooks; but they're too stupid to find it out."

I was really shocked at this sort of profanity. "Do you know," said I, calmly, "that if you had done what you said you would do, you would have put your hand to a falsehood, signing yourself 'head of the house?'"

"Fiddle-de-dee!" was her answer. "Perhaps it would not be a falsehood."

"Further," I went on, "listen to this: any one not giving correct information is liable to five pounds penalty, besides the inconvenience and annoyance—these are the very words of the form—of appearing before two justices of the peace, and being convicted of having made a wilful misstatement of age, or of any of the particulars. You see on what a precipice you stand."

"Nonsense," she said, laughing; "justices, indeed! Who has been filling your head with this childish twaddle? By the way, dear, to-morrow night the girls asked some friends here for a little quiet tea.

"Sunday night!" I said, horrified. "Tea-parties on Sunday night! oh, I can't have it! This is always the way when I go away. Heaven knows what takes place in my absence." I was really angry at this unworthy advantage that had been taken of my absence, when she interrupted me, and with more sense than I could have believed her capable of, said:

"You know they will count as visitors, and keep up our respectability. The government must take notice of it!"

I could not help smiling at this idea.

There was in truth something in it: and when I was alone I betook myself to studying the form carefully, and was aghast at finding that after all this minuteness of direction, there was a certain obscurity and ambiguity. I have often found this the case where you try to be specially simple, and to adapt your ideas to the meanest capacity. Thus it said that, "Persons following more distinct occupations than one, should insert them *in the order of their importance.*"

How was I to decide between conflicting claims? Here was I, holding an office of trust in a City house, and at the same time contributing largely to the literature of the country, many of my little lucubrations being complimented with a place in the Little Pedlington Mercury, the Camden Town Gazette, and other influential organs. How was I to take on me the invidious task of deciding between these occupations? Here was a breakdown at the start. But the most alarming embarrassment came from column number three, which described "condition," where "married" or "unmarried," &c., was to be placed opposite the names of all except "young children." What was a "young child"? There was Polly, my second girl, thirteen years old: was she a young child, or an old one? If the latter, was I to put "unmarried" against her? How many families were there in the kingdom in which the same doubt would arise, and the error be thus multiplied? What was I to do? I had to declare solemnly the truth of the matter, under my hand.

Thus distracted, and seeing what enormous difficulties were before me in what appeared a very simple matter, I looked ruefully at the form, determining to adjourn it till the morning.

On the Sunday evening I found the little party assembled. Patty ran to me. "My own dearest duck of papa, you won't be angry; but you must ask Mr. Tithebarn to stay the night. He could not help it; he is obliged, by the government, you know——"

I was speechless with indignation, for there before me was the free-and-easy Tithebarn.

"Look here," he said, "sir. Just one word, and you will forgive. I am forced to be here on account of the census."

"The census!" I repeated. "What do you mean?"

"I mean," he said, "by its stringent rules you are bound, in conscience, to give a true return. Am I not a visitor here?"

"Ridiculous," I said; "this is mere fooling. I forbade you to enter the house. Besides," I said, "you don't understand the meaning of the form. You don't know what you are talking about."

"Then where is it?" he said. "Let us see it."

"I'll convince you in a second," I replied. And I hurried him down to the study. I showed him the column, and how the visitorship applied only to such persons as stopped the night. He owned his error, I must say, modestly, and asked my pardon. It was a misconstruction, he said. He would leave at once. He knew that I felt so anxious about the government getting a true return.

"Well," I said, "you had better stay for dinner, at all events."

I must say the dinner that followed was very pleasant, every one was in such spirits; and I must also say that Mr. Tithebarn, of whom I had known little before, rather recommended himself by his stories. But, for all that, he would have to enter himself in column number six merely as "commercial clerk;" he would not do as "occupier of a house" with my Patty. After dinner there was tea. And then the party broke up. I was still thinking of my official form. There was a vast deal of work before me, collecting the ages—the women would be the difficulty there—and the enumerator would come early in the morning.

I went down to my study to think it over. Suddenly young Tithebarn came down to me hurriedly. It was midnight.

"Not gone!" I said.

"My dear sir," he replied, "what are we to do—you must tell me. For you, as 'head of the house,' will have to decide, and it seems a serious responsibility."

"What do you mean?" I said, with some nervousness.

"The simple point is, where are you to enter me?"

"I shall not enter you at all. You are not," I said, reading from the form "either head of the family, wife, child, or other relative, or visitor."

"Other relative," he said, with a sigh. "Ah, if I could be entered under this! But you are surely bound to set me down as visitor?"

"Not at all, my dear Tithebarn," I said, getting interested. "You should sleep here to night to be a visitor. That," said I, "is about as probable as that the moon should fall."

"Well, then," he replied, "see the re-

sult—I shall not be counted at all. I shall have to travel all to-night, and shall not get to London until to-morrow about midday. What is the result, I am left out of the census. And the fault will be yours," he added, reproachfully. "If every one behaved that way government might whistle for its census."

It had not struck me in that view before. He was right. The returns would be worthless if made up in that manner. I would have to attach my name solemnly, to what I knew was a nullity. Yet what was I to do? I could not enter him as a visitor, and would not if I could. He saw my hesitation, and went on.

"And you know there is the penalty, five pounds fine for not giving 'correct information;' besides," he added, reading from the form "'the annoyance and inconvenience of appearing before two justices of the peace.'"

"Yes, papa," said Patty, who had just come in.

"But what is all this to me?" I said. "Even on the construction of this form, you will not pass the night here, and therefore we have nothing to do with you. Yes"—he looked nonplussed at this—"only those," I continued, "be they visitors or members of my own household, who sleep in this house, are to be set down by me, as occupier."

He had nothing to say. But Patty suddenly cried, "ABODE, papa!"

"Yes," he said, "I can abide here, walk about all night——"

"Or sit on a chair by the kitchen fire; that would amount to abiding," said Patty.

I could not but admire this ingenuity, which was worthy of a special pleader's office, though I tried to look angry. "He shall not abide here," I said.

"Well, if he does not, papa," continued she, still more eagerly, "one can be 'travelling or working' all night long, and return here to-morrow. You see it says so: 'no person absent to be entered here, except those who may be travelling, or out at work during that night and who return home on Monday.'"

"That is clear," said the young fellow; "so I shall return to-morrow, after travelling all night, and you will have incurred the penalty of the law. I have given you warning I shall return here to-morrow, after working all night."

It was really a serious dilemma. I turned it in every way. If I put him down as "visitor," it would be an untruth, for he would not have slept here the night before. If I did not put him down I should be the cause of a false return, thereby contributing to imperil the success of the great measure, or he might, as he had threatened to do, secretly "abide" about the premises, and showing himself next morning, establish a valid claim to be counted a member of my household. And once legally recognised in such a way, with his name coming after Patty's, I knew the coolness of the man to be such, that he would never let the matter rest, but would use it as a lever to prize himself into my household. After a short struggle I had to give way, as I felt the State had a paramount claim, and within a month, as I anticipated, he had entitled himself to a place in the second column as son-in-law.

PLOGARRIAN.

IN SEVEN CHAPTERS. CHAPTER V.

THE young are passionate, but not persistent mourners. It is the wise and beneficent law of their nature that such should be the case. And it is a very great mistake, too often made, to imagine that a lad or lass is heartless because the God-given elasticity of their forward, and not backward looking hearts successfully rebels against, and throws off the weight of, a great sorrow.

Marie came to her uncle's house in Rouen a heart-broken girl enough, fully convinced that smiles and happiness were over for her in this world. But in a very few weeks her mind was opening itself to all the new surroundings—the new sights, the new faces, the new occupations of the new world into which she had come. Poor Captain Morel was still pacing his deck during many a solitary hour in distant seas, with his head sunk on his breast, busy with memory only, when Marie was already laughing her old blithe laugh as musically and as merrily as ever, and was busying herself with a hopeful outlook into the future. It was quite right, quite wise, quite natural that it should be so.

Mademoiselle Géneviève Vezin was entirely of that opinion. She was not one of those who approved of, or tolerated, what she called "giving way." Nor would it have seemed in any wise natural to her, that a young person brought from a residence at Havre to live at Rouen, should not have felt the change a consolation under any circumstances. She was a Norman to the backbone, and in her heart of hearts considered the grand old Norman

capital to be as much superior to Paris, in every respect save size, as Normans were to all other Frenchmen in every respect, size included.

She was entirely pleased that Marie should recover her good spirits, and fortunately saw other reasons for approving of the new member of the little family. She soon discovered both that Marie was far better educated than she had anticipated, and that she was quite disposed to consider herself as having everything yet to learn, from the superior experience and attainments of the gouvernante. So that the relationship between them promised to be in every way agreeable. With her uncle, the beautiful and modest Marie very naturally soon became a favourite.

It so happened that more than two months elapsed after Marie's arrival in her new home before she had any opportunity of seeing her old friend and playfellow, Jean Delaroche. There chanced to be some special examinations, or academical discipline of some kind going on at the seminary, which kept the students at home, and prevented them from visiting their friends in the city. And it thus came to pass that Marie had made a new acquaintance, before she had any opportunity of renewing her former habits of intimacy with her old one.

The matter happened in this wise.

Mademoiselle Géneviève had a brother living in Rouen, a wealthy grazier, who had only for the last three or four years established himself in the capital of his province to enjoy the ease to which a long life of successful industry had entitled him. Monsieur Vezin was wont to see a good deal of company at his hospitable house in the Avenue des Marronniers. For himself, the worthy grazier would have preferred passing all his evenings, as he did most of them, at the café. But there was a Madame Vezin, and there were marriageable daughters, whose tastes and interests it was right to take into account. And thus it came to pass that on every Sunday evening a select circle of, not perhaps quite the best, but certainly the second best, society in the Norman capital was to be found assembled in the Avenue des Marronniers. The selection of the weekly festival day for these gatherings was an especially fortunate circumstance for Mademoiselle Géneviève Vezin, the canon's gouvernante, for it enabled her to profit by these gaieties, pretty well the only chance of outlook into the social world available to her. Had they taken place on any other day, this could hardly have been the case. For it would not have been compatible with the duties of her position, which the gouvernante prided herself on never, on any account, neglecting, to leave Monsieur le Chanoine to himself during an entire evening. There was no knowing what he might not have done, what troubles he might not have got into, what deprivations he might have been exposed to. He might have gone out into the street without his cloak, or his black worsted comforter round his neck. He might have set the house on fire. It was a thing not to be thought of.

But on the Sunday it was Canon Morel's habit to pass the evening with a brother canon, much his senior, who was too old and infirm to leave his own fireside of an evening. The good canon, in talking to his faithful gouvernante, used to speak of these weekly visits as an act of Christian charity, no doubt in strict accordance with the truth. It may perhaps, however, be suspected that he was less accurate when he referred, as he would sometimes casually do, to the edifying talk supposed to take place between the two dignitaries on the occasion of these meetings. Had Asmodeus been playing his pranks in Rouen, the two old gentlemen might probably have been found intent on the great national game of dominoes.

It was on the eighth Saturday after Marie's arrival at Rouen that the gouvernante proposed to her that she should accompany her to her brother's house. She had with difficulty persuaded herself to wait so long before taking this step. But Marie had naturally shrunk from this first emerging from the quiet and shady retirement of her uncle's home, in which the daily life went on as regularly, as monotonously, and almost with as little variety of sound as the great clock that droned its sleepy life away in the parlour. Indeed, she still shrank from the ordeal. But Mademoiselle Vezin would allow her no longer respite. She had been looking forward with considerable pride and triumph to the production of so striking an ornament to her brother's salon as this newly-found niece — the niece of Monsieur le Chanoine, of course, but that came to quite the same thing. She had boasted much at her brother's of the beauty, modesty, amiability, and charms of all sorts of her new charge, and it irked her to be obliged, Sunday after Sunday, to say that her Phœnix was not yet presentable.

It was impossible, as the good gouvernante urged, that anything could become Marie better than her thin black barège dress, setting off, as it did, her tall slender figure, and the snow-white purity of her delicate and lily-like complexion. Mademoiselle Géneviève was quite right. She knew perfectly well what she was talking about. And so the black barège was put on; a simple black velvet band bound, and in binding showed well the lovely tint of her abundant blond hair; and Marie suffered herself to be taken to the house in the Avenue des Marronniers, looking, had she but guessed it, lovely enough to have caused no little sensation in many a far more brilliant assembly.

It was the first party at which Marie had ever been present. And a girl's first party is an epoch in her life. Little Marie was terribly nervous, terribly alarmed. Again and again she besought Mademoiselle Vezin to remember that she had never been introduced into society before; that she did not know what she ought to do, and what to leave undone; that she was sure she should not be able to speak a word. The gouvernante told her that it was very easy and simple to do as the others did, and that as for speaking, les petites demoiselles were intended to be looked at, and not to be heard.

So Marie, stilling with a strong effort the beating of her heart as far as she could, and with the whiteness of her cheek a little tinged with a delicate blush, walked behind Mademoiselle Géneviève into Monsieur Vezin's little salon, brilliant with half a dozen lamps, and found herself in the presence of some half a score of stout, comfortable looking Norman bourgeois and bourgeoises, together with as many more less stout and less comfortable-looking jeunes gens of the next succeeding generation, with just for all the world the same feelings, which your grace may remember to have been conscious of, when some five-and-twenty years ago, you made your first appearance at Almack's.

Of course she soon found that the ordeal was not so dreadful as she had imagined. The three Mademoiselles Vezin took possession of her, crowding around her in their blue-ribboned white muslin robes, and endeavouring to the best of their power, and with some measure of success, to make curiosity assume the semblance of interest and friendliness. Then she found herself placed on a chair with her back against the wall, between two fat old ladies, who after a civil little speech apiece, conversed with each other across her. And Marie congratulated herself upon the safety of her position.

In a very few minutes, however, she found that it by no means afforded the security she had imagined. The master of the house had not yet been presented to her; and he now marched up to her to perform that ceremony for himself. He was a great burly man, looking much more like an Englishman than a native of any other part of France could have done, with a broad, red, good-natured face, kind, and well-meaning, but with about as much possibility of conceiving the idea of any person being caused to suffer by having their most sacred sorrows touched by a rude hand, as one of his own oxen.

"Mademoiselle, charmè d'avoir le plaisir. So you are Marie Morel. My daughters have only just told me you were here—excusez. Ma foi, mademoiselle, the captain may be very proud of his daughter, permettez que je vous le dise—mais en vérité et sans compliments. N'est ce pas qu'elle est jolie comme la plus jolie de toutes les anges, Ma-ame Bourdon?" he added, turning to one of the stout dames by her side, who having blouzy daughters of her own, thought that le père Vezin was quite getting into his dotage.

"Et comme cette petite robe noire lui va à ravir, n'est ce pas?" continued the worthy grazier, little heeding the heightened colour and painful embarrassment of the poor girl. "And that reminds me," he went on, pitilessly, "they tell me you have lost your mother. Pauvre petite. C'est dommage. But we must all die you know; and it's no good crying over what can't be helped. How old was Madame Morel when she died?"

Poor little Marie was by this time biting her quivering lip to restrain herself from bursting into tears; and, when she looked up piteously into her tormentor's face at his last point-blank question, she was utterly unable to speak a word.

Just at that critical moment of her distress, a young man, who had lounged up to the spot, where she was sitting and was ostensibly employing himself in speaking to Madame Bourbon, but whose very evident object was to ask the master of the house for an introduction to Mademoiselle Morel as soon as he could find an opportunity of doing so, said suddenly and abruptly, "Monsieur Vezin, Madame Vezin is calling you. She wishes, I think, the piano to be moved."

Monsieur Vezin turned immediately to go in quest of his wife; and Marie, who had very plainly comprehended the ruse of her deliverer and its intention, felt infinitely grateful to him for it.

He was quite a young man, of dark complexion, and very tolerably good-looking. And his black gloves, and the crape upon the hat which he had in his hand, showed that he, too, was in mourning. Having thus succeeded in his object, as has been said, he discreetly waited for awhile to allow Marie time to recover herself, before he asked one of the daughters of the house to present him to her:

"Mademoiselle Morel — Monsieur de Kergonnec de Plogarrian," said the young lady, not perhaps quite as graciously as she might have done, and then turned on her heel.

After a few words meaning nothing had been spoken between them, Marie could not refrain from saying to him:

"I saw very well just now that you perceived how much Monsieur Vezin was distressing me, without meaning it the least in the world, poor man. And I must tell you, monsieur, how grateful I was to you for your help."

"Eh! mademoiselle, I was but too able to understand all that you were suffering—all that must have been in your heart. It needed no great penetration on my part." he added, touching the crape on his hat with his finger as he spoke. "It is easy to sympathise with a sorrow which is the counterpart of one's own. I, too, have recently lost a mother."

Monsieur de Kergonnec—Alain de Kergonnec he let her know his name was—then went on to tell her that his father had had dealings with Monsieur Vezin, having been wont for many years to send up the lean kine bred on the lands of Plogarrian to the richer pastures of Normandy to be fattened, as is the wont of Breton landowners; and that that was how he came to have the good fortune of making her acquaintance. And then they spoke each of their homes, so recently bereaved, and of the blank they had felt to be left in their lives.

And when they parted, Alain de Kergonnec had won little Marie Morel's heart. He had made her grateful to him. He had spoken to her words of sympathy. He had made her feel as if there were a tie of sympathy between them, which was not shared by any of those around them. And this was all that was necessary to enable the young man to captivate the heart of the young girl. Not that if it had so happened that Marie had never again seen or heard of Monsieur de Kergonnec after parting with him that night she would have been heart-broken, or even very unhappy. But the foundation was laid, and well laid. She was sure to think of him in after hours of solitude; sure to feel that there was a wide difference between him and all the other people she had seen; sure to put him on a pedestal in her heart.

And it did *not* so happen that she neither saw nor heard any more of Monsieur de Kergonnec after that, to her, eventful evening. On the following Sunday she went again to Monsieur Vezin's house, and again met Alain de Kergonnec there. But they had met before that. For he had caused himself to be presented in due form to Mademoiselle Vezin, who had made herself fully acquainted with his name and parentage within the first five minutes after she had seen him speaking to her charge, and had obtained from the gouvernante permission to pay his respects at the house of the canon.

And then—after a few such visits, and a few more evenings spent in the Avenue des Marronniers, which social gatherings Marie had come to consider as extremely pleasant things, and to look forward to as the most agreeable feature in her life—then it had come to that pass, that Marie would have been broken-hearted had she been told that she was never to see Alain de Kergonnec any more.

And then also Mademoiselle Vezin began to bethink herself that it would be well for her to have a little serious talk with her brother upon the subject of Monsieur de Kergonnec. She went accordingly one morning, while Monsieur le Chanoine was at the cathedral, to her brother's house for this purpose, and was met by the information, very readily given as soon as she had mentioned the name of Monsieur de Kergonnec, that the young man was engaged to be married to one of the largest heiresses in the Finisterre, being himself an only son, and the heir to a very considerable property. The marriage, M. Vezin added, would have taken place before now, had it not been that the extreme youth of the lady made it necessary to wait yet a year or two.

Poor Mademoiselle Vezin was terribly taken aback at this news, and could not help feeling a certain degree of self-reproach. She was exceedingly glad, however, that her brother's readiness to tell

what he knew had put her in possession of the facts before she had uttered any word that could in any way compromise Marie; and she contented herself with hoping that no serious mischief had been done, and that little Marie would very soon forget that she had ever seen Monsieur de Kergonnec.

But the poor gouvernante was shutting the stable door after the steed had been stolen, as completely as any one was ever guilty of that piece of wisdom.

Some little time before this conversation of Mademoiselle Vezin with her brother, the period during which the seminarists were detained within their walls had come to an end, and Jean Delaroche had been able to visit his friend and patron as usual. And of course he and Marie met; and of course there were tears to be shed between them, the drops of which mingled with each other. And Jean Delaroche, as he walked home alone and silently in the evening to his seminary, began to think, for the first time, that the high and noble calling to which he, a poor foundling, had had the signal good fortune to be invited, carried with it some drawbacks of a very terrible kind. For the first time it began to seem doubtful to him whether he could fitly, and with such goodwill and zeal as he ought to feel, enter irrevocably the gates that were so soon to be opened before him. For the first time the vows that were to separate him from the world in such sort as to shut him out for ever from all thought of woman's love, seemed horrible to him. And as he sat in his little lonely cell, and lay awake for hours afterward in his pallet, he thought this renunciation would be impossible to him, that even yet he had not so put his hand to the plough but that he might still without dishonour turn back.

But yet there was only one thing, for the sake of which he would fain be loosed from the bonds which were to bind him. If he could have, if he might hope to be blessed by Marie Morel's love, not all the Church could offer him should tempt him to accept her benefits accompanied by her chains.

On the first day on which it was possible to him to do so, he returned to the canon's house, determined to ascertain whether any hope of such a blessing might be his. The common emotion which they had shared together at their first meeting after so many years of absence, and after the death of her who had been scarcely more a mother to one than to the other of them, was well calculated to deceive him upon this point. All thought of love—of such love as Delaroche was dreaming of—had been far enough from Marie's mind, occupied as it was by another, while they had sat together hand in hand, and mingling their tears. But it is intelligible enough, and excusable enough, that the poor seminarist should have dreamed a different dream.

The waking came very soon, however. Poor Jean! And it was a merciless waking, too, as merciless as sudden and complete. For Marie was harder than she might have been to him. Who is to fathom all the intricate recesses, jealously concealed as they are from prying eyes, of the youthful female heart? Why was she, generally all gentleness and loving sweetness, hard to the poor fellow, her old close friend and playmate, whose only fault towards her was that he loved her too truly and too well? Why? Perhaps from the very circumstance of their old relationship. Perhaps the having so long regarded Delaroche in a totally different light, made it seem to her absurd to be asked suddenly to change her feeling towards him so entirely, and made him seem absurd and offensive for asking it. Perhaps it was, because he forced on her heart the recognition of how impossible it was that she should ever think of any man with thoughts of love, save of him who had so lately made himself master of her heart. Perhaps she was angry with him for mistaking the nature of the feeling she had so frankly manifested at their last meeting.

At all events, it was not difficult to let him know and understand that there was no hope for him. Marie could not tell him that she loved another, especially when that other had never in formal terms asked her for her love. And poor Delaroche had too much modesty of feeling to make it possible for him to ask her whether the reason why he could not have that which he coveted, was because it was already given to another.

But none the less did the poor seminarist perceive from the artless transparency of Marie's words, and looks, and manner that such must be the case. And was it a matter of surprise that such a prize should not have been reserved for him; for him, the poor nameless pensioner, first on her father's and then on her uncle's bounty; for him, too, who was—if not vowed—all but vowed to the Church? As he stole out of the canon's house, and slunk home to his seminary by back streets, feeling as if he were afraid to be seen, he marvelled, with genuine wonder, at the madness which could have urged him to nourish such a

hope, and prefer such a suit! Bitter shame at his folly mingled with the bitterness of his rejection and of hopeless love. A sudden heat came over him, and he blushed in the solitude of his cell, even as he knelt to pray that he might be forgiven for his backturning, and strengthened to fight down this madness, when his imagination presented to him the picture of himself clad in his seminarist's semi-priestly robe, offering love to that beautiful girl! It did add to the incongruity that ungainly robe of serge, encasing his tall, slight figure from the neck to the ankles! And it might well have been, that part of Marie's harshness in rejecting him, had been due to this outward and visible sign of the abyss, that should have been impassable between Delaroche and every thought of human passion.

Poor Delaroche prayed, and fasted, and did penance, and mortified the body, and prayed again. We all have known what it is to struggle in such a fight, whether we call it a fight against our own passions, or a fight with the foul fiend. One man may best fight his fight by such means as the seminarist's education had taught him to use, and another may find other means of warfare more adapted to him. But Delaroche fought truly, and bravely, and long. And he who does so will not fail to win the victory.

Jean Delaroche did win the victory. Not that he came out from the fight unscathed. He had received wounds which it would take many a long year to heal entirely. And grave and almost melancholy as had been the natural disposition of his boyhood, he came out from the ordeal he had passed a yet graver man. Nevertheless, he no longer went forward on his destined path with a half heart. He knew that the only way of making his lot in life endurable was, on the contrary, to put all his heart into it; and when, shortly after the time at which this, the poor boy's first and last dream had been dreamed, he received the first orders of the Church, the diocese of Rouen did not contain a man more zealously eager to begin the warfare to which his life had been consecrated, and to give himself and all his best energies to the work.

The superiors of Rome's hierarchy generally know the men they have under them well; and it was not likely that such a man as Delaroche should long wait for employment. At the very earliest possible age he was sent to take charge of the parish of Tregastel, on the northern coast of the department of the Côtes du Nord.

Nor did he see Marie Morel again before departing to begin his new duties. It cost him one more struggle—what was that in addition to all the struggling past?—to do so; but he knew that it was so best and wisest.

Marie's other lover exercised no such self-restraint. There was a last meeting between her and Alain de Kergonnec, in which all was avowed on both sides—one of those meetings, that leave more terrible and enduring scars on the heart, than the parting they precede. Alain avowed his love for her, and for her only, in all the world, while confessing the impossibility of acting in such a matter in opposition to the will of his father. Could he only follow the dictates of his own heart, not all the dowers of all the heiresses in France should weigh a featherweight in the scale.

He was not a man of the same calibre as Jean Delaroche. But it was doubtless true that he did love Marie, and would not have renounced her love for any richer marriage that could be offered to him, if he had been free to act according to the dictates of his own heart.

But it might be doubted whether there were more of kindness than of cruelty in telling the girl from whom he was about to part that there was yet to be a respite of two years, and perhaps three, before the marriage with Mademoiselle de Tressinien could take place. That young lady was not quite fifteen years old at that time; and though the betrothal was to take place at once, the marriage was to be deferred till the lady should be eighteen; and who knew what might take place in the interval!

One word of palliation, feeble enough, may be said for Alain de Kergonnec. Those readers who have not forgotten the picture that was presented to them of Gregoire de Kergonnec in his youth, may conceive that such a man in his middle age would be a father whom it would not be easy for a son, and especially a French son, to oppose in the matter of his marriage.

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THE ROSE AND THE KEY.

CHAPTER XXXIX. THOUGH SOME PEOPLE GO HOME, THE BALL GOES ON.

FOR a time neither lady seemed disposed to talk.

Maud's ruminations were exciting and unsatisfactory. She had acted a good deal from impulse, and, as she now, perhaps, secretly thought, neither very wisely nor very kindly. She expected a lecture from Maximilla. She would have preferred combat to her own solitary self-upbraidings. At all events, she quickly grew weary of her reflections, and, turning her eyes to her silent companion in the shadow of her own corner, she said:

"I quite forgot to ask Lady Mardykes who her solemn friend, with the black square beard, is. Did you?"

"Yes—if you mean did I forget; at least, I don't think I had an opportunity. But, to tell you the truth," here Miss Max yawned, "I don't much care. He looks like a foreigner."

"Yes. He has good eyes. There is something quiet and masterly in his air. I saw him afterwards talking to Doctor Malkin."

"Yes, so did I. I can't endure that man," exclaimed Miss Max. "What on earth brings him to a ball, of all places?"

"I don't know, unless he hopes some of the old squires may have an apoplexy at supper," answered Maud Vernon.

"It might have been wiser if he had stayed at home. I dare say Barbara would have had him to tea if he had looked in, and he would have had the advantage of a tête-à-tête," said Maximilla.

"The advantage—what do you mean?" asked Maud.

"Why, Mr. Foljambe told us yesterday — you must have been thinking of something else—that your mamma will have in the course of the year, I think it was four medical appointments, virtually in her gift; including the supply of medicines to the county jail, which will be given to whatever candidate she supports. And they are altogether worth between eleven and twelve hundred a year, I think he said, and that's the reason why Doctor Malkin is so frequent a visitor just now."

"I should be very glad," said Maud.

"I don't care twopence who gets them," said Maximilla, resignedly. "There is some Doctor Murchison—I think that was the name—who is a rather formidable competitor."

"Did Ethel Tintern dance much to-night?" asked the young lady.

"Not a great deal. I don't think she seemed to care for the ball."

Here came a silence. And after two or three minutes Miss Max said suddenly:

"It strikes me you have been sowing the wind to-night, my dear."

"Sowing the wind! How? What have I done?"

"Come, Maud, you know as well as I what you have been doing. You have treated Mr. Marston very ill; and you have prepared, you may be sure, an animated scene at home. I can tell you, Barbara will be extremely angry; and not without very good reason."

"You mean about Captain Vivian?" said Maud, a little sulkily.

"Of course I mean about Captain Vivian," replied Miss Max.

"Well there's no good in talking about it now. It's done, and I can't help it, and, indeed, I could not have prevented it; and I don't want to talk about it," said Maud, pettishly.

"And what is Mr. Marston to think?"

"What he pleases," Maud answered. "You know what mamma thinks of the Marstons. I think my chance of going to Lady Mardykes' would have been pretty well ended if she heard that I gave Mr. Marston a great many dances, and she will know everything about this ball. It was not my fault, Captain Vivian asking for all those dances. I'm very glad he did. I hope people remarked it. I hope mamma will hear of it. If she does she will think of nothing else, I dare say."

The young lady laughed, and then she sighed.

"Upon my word you are complicating the situation very prettily," said Miss Max.

"I suppose I am doing everything that is wrong and foolish; yet I believe it is best as it is," said the young lady. "I did not want to vex Mr. Marston; and if he has any sense he'll understand perfectly that I did not; and what need I care whether old Lord Hawkshawe, or Mr. Pindles, or Mr. Wylder, or any of the people who intended I should stay all night, dancing with them in that hot room, are pleased or not?"

"Captain Vivian was determined certainly to make the most of his opportunity," observed Miss Max.

And again the conversation flagged, and Miss Medwyn's active mind was employed upon the problem, and busy in conjecturing Captain Vivian's motive.

"Either he wishes to pique Barbara," she thought, "or he means to try his chances of success, in good faith, with Maud. I can quite understand that. But he is not the kind of person Maud would ever like, and I do think she likes Mr. Marston."

Then again she recalled Captain Vivian's sayings and doings that night at Wymering, to try to discover new lights and hidden meanings, to guide her to a right reading of that little episode.

While these two ladies are driving along the moon-lit roads towards Roydon Hall, the festivities of Wymering have lost nothing of their energy.

I shall ask you, therefore, to peep into the ball-room for a few minutes more, where you will find that Captain Vivian has just begged of old Mr. Tintern to introduce him to Miss Tintern. That young lady says to Mr. Tintern, hastily:

"Oh, don't, please!"

But her papa, not hearing, or, at least, not heeding, does present Captain Vivian, who carries off the young lady on his arm.

"If you don't mind, I should prefer not dancing this time. It is so crowded," says Miss Tintern.

"I'm so glad," says he. "There is a quadrille after this. You must come where we shall be quiet for two or three minutes."

In the recess outside the ball-room, on the lobby at the head of the great staircase, an old-fashioned sofa is placed.

Skirting the dancers, to this he led her. When she had sat down,

"Ethel," he said, "you are very angry—that is to say, very unjust. What have I done?"

"What have you done?" she repeats. "You have placed me in the most miserable situation. How am I to look Maud Vernon in the face again? What will papa think of me? Is not concealment enough? Why should you practise positive deception? I don't like it. I'm entirely against it. You make me utterly miserable."

"Now, Ethel, don't be unreasonable. You must not blame me, for that which neither you nor I can prevent. When the time comes I'll speak out frankly enough. I could not help coming to Roydon. I could not refuse, without a risk of vexing Mr. Dawe very much, and that, for fifty reasons, would never do. I can't tell you all I've suffered, being so near, and unable to contrive a meeting, with scarcely an opportunity even of writing. Don't suppose that the vexation has been all yours; I have been positively miserable, and I knew very well all the ridiculous things that were said; and how they must have pained you. A little patience, a little time."

"I know all that very well, and I have suffered from those strange rumours, and I have suffered to-night. I feel so treacherous and deceitful. I won't be made an accomplice in such things. I hate myself, for hesitating to tell Maud how it really is."

"My dear Ethel, you must not be foolish. Living down here so much in the country, you make too much of trifles. What can it signify my dancing a few dances, more or less, with Miss Vernon? Do you fancy she cares about me, or that any one seriously thinks there can be anything more than that she likes my dancing, and that I admire her diamonds? Why, dancing two or three dances at a ball means absolutely nothing. Every one knows that. There is nothing in it but this—that people won't guess anything of the real state of things. They won't see anything, for instance, in our quiet little talk here."

Miss Buffins here passing by, with her

hand on Captain Bamme's arm, stops, her cheeks flushed and radiant with her triumphs, and remarks what a jolly ball it is, and how hot the room is, and how every one seems to be enjoying it so much, and so she gabbles on. Captain Bamme, smiling, with his mouth open, and his face hot and shining, is not able to get in a word, facetious or complimentary, and Miss Buffins, as she entertains Miss Tintern, is scanning her dress, and estimating its value in detail, while more slyly still, she inspects Captain Vivian.

At length, the crowd setting in a stronger current towards the supper-room, Captain Bamme and his fair charge are hurried away, smiling, towards chickens, tongue, lobster-salad, and those other comforts which the gallant captain loves with a secret, middle-aged affection that quite supersedes the sentimental vanities of earlier years. I think, with all his ostentatious gallantry, just then, the gay deceiver, who is jostling among elbows and shoulders, and bawling to waiters for cold salmon or lobster for this lady with a chivalric self-sacrifice, wishes her all the time, if the truth were known, at the bottom of the Red Sea. But he will return, after he has restored her to her mother, in quiet moments, when people, who know less of life, are busy dancing, and, with a shrewd gourmandise, will task the energies of the waiters, and strip chickens of their liver-wings, crunch lobster-salad, plunge into Strasbourg patés, drink champagne, and, with shining forehead and reckless enthusiasm, leave to-morrow's headache to take care of itself.

CHAPTER XL. LADY VERNON GROWS ANXIOUS.

The morning after the ball Mr. Tintern was prodigiously uncomfortable. He was now, indeed, quite easy about Lady Vernon's fancied matrimonial designs; but relief at one point is too often accompanied by an acute pressure at another.

Captain Vivian had been audacious, nay, ostentatious, in his devotion to Miss Vernon at the Wymering ball. Whatever his reason, he seemed to wish that people should remark his attentions, and the young lady had certainly shown no unwillingness to permit them.

Next morning, before twelve o'clock, Mr. Tintern was at Roydon Hall, full of the occurrences of the night before.

Mr. Tintern has observed, with satisfaction, that for more than a year his relations with Lady Vernon have been growing in confidence, and even intimacy. Call when he may, Lady Vernon is never denied to him now.

"Her ladyship is in the library, sir."

"Oh!"

And Mr. Tintern follows the tall footman through the silent, stately rooms, to the door he knows so well.

He is announced, and very graciously received.

"You have come to consult about your projected road, I suppose? And, oddly enough, I had just been looking over the map with Mr. Penrhyn."

"Well, thanks. Yes, any time, you know, that suits you, Lady Vernon, would do for that; but I happened to be passing this way, and I thought I might as well look in and tell you one or two things that struck me last night at the ball. You'll not be surprised, perhaps, but I was, a good deal: it is so unaccountable, except, indeed, on one supposition. I know how you feel about it, but, certainly, it does confirm my very high ideas, Lady Vernon, of your penetration. Only think, I'm going to tell you what I heard from the man himself! Miss Vernon obtained from old Lomax, the keeper of the Old Hall Inn, you know, an order of admission to the gallery of the town-hall for Miss Medwyn and her maid. And with this order Miss Medwyn went; and who do you think with her? Not her maid; by no means; no. It was Miss Vernon, and dressed in some old stuff—such a dress, I'm told, I suppose a lady's-maid would not be seen in it; and Miss Medwyn, I'm assured, tried to dissuade her, and they had a little dispute about it. But it would not do, and so Miss Vernon of Roydon carried her point, and presented herself as Miss Medwyn's servant!"

"It is a continuation of the same vein—nothing new. It only shows how persistent it is," says Lady Vernon, closing her eyes with a little frown, and running one finger tip meditatively to and fro over her finely pencilled black eyebrow.

"Only think," repeats Mr. Tintern, with a little shrug, lowering his voice eagerly, and expanding his hands like a man making a painful exposition, "without the slightest temptation, nothing on earth to make it intelligible."

"I am afraid, Mr. Tintern, it is not very easy to account for all this; upon any pleasant theory I mean."

"I thought it my duty, Lady Vernon, considering the terms of, I may say, confi-

dence to which you have been so good as to admit me, to mention this; and, also, perhaps another circumstance which excited, I may say, very general observation last night at the ball, and I fancy you would prefer my being quite straight and above board in giving you my opinion and the result of my observation."

"Certainly, I shall thank you very much," said the lady, raising her eyes suddenly, and fixing them upon him with a rather stern expectation.

"Well, I believe it is but right to tell you that your guest, Captain Vivian, devoted himself in, I may say, an extraordinary way to Miss Vernon, your daughter. Now, I don't know what that young man's position or expectations may be; but it is of course quite possible he may be in many respects an eligible parti for Miss Vernon. But if he be, perhaps considering all you have been so good as to tell me, don't you think, a—eh? he ought to be a—a—warned, don't you think?"

"Captain Vivian," she answered, with the fire that comes with excitement in each cheek, "Mr. Dawe tells me, has scarcely four hundred a year, and has no chance of succeeding to anything, unless, indeed, Mr. Dawe should leave him something, which, of course, may never happen. I need not tell you that nothing could be more amazing than any such pretensions. Pray let me know why you suppose them possible."

"The evidence," replied Mr. Tintern, "was patent to every one at Wymering last night. Nothing could be more marked, and I am bound to say, speaking to you, Lady Vernon, what I should hesitate to say to any one else, I say he was received as favourably as he could have hoped. In fact, if he were the greatest muff in England, and he is far from being anything of the kind, he could not have failed to see it, and see it he did."

Lady Vernon was looking down upon the table, following with her pencil's point the lines of her monogram engraved upon the gold plate on the side of her blotting-book, and continuing to do so, with a very black countenance, smiling sourly on the interlacing initials, she said:

"There has been a great deal of duplicity then; I fancied one evening I did see something, but it seemed quite to have died out by next day, and never was renewed—great duplicity; it is morbid, it is not an amiable trait, not attractive, but, of course, we must view it with charity."

"I hope I have done right in telling you, Lady Vernon?" said Mr. Tintern, who was in no haste to see Miss Vernon married, no more indeed than Lady Vernon was.

"Of course, you know, we should all be glad, the whole county I mean, to see her suitably married," he continued, "and suitably in her case would, of course, mean splendidly; and less than that would not, I think, satisfy expectation. But a creature—a—a whipper-snapper like that," he said, with his head on one side, and his hands expanded, and a little shrug in plaintive expostulation, "an adventurer, and I—really for the life of me, I can't see anything to make up for it."

"People see with different eyes, Mr. Tintern," she said, looking on the rings that covered the fingers of her finely formed hand; "and you saw this yourself?"

"I saw it, and you may trust my report. I say there is—I don't say a romance—but a great deal more than a romance, established in that quarter — and — you know, it would amount to this, that the young lady would be simply sacrificed!"

And Mr. Tintern threw back his arms with his hands open, and a look of wild stupefaction, which plainly conveyed the despair in which such a catastrophe would plunge this loyal county.

"But a ball is a kind of thing," said Lady Vernon, meditatively, "at which unreal flirtation is always carried on. You may be looking at this in much too serious a light, Mr. Tintern."

"Oh, pardon me, Lady Vernon. I make every allowance, but this was nothing of the kind. It would be misleading you most unjustifiably if I were to acquiesce in any such supposition."

"Well, you know, it would be, as you say, utterly untenable and monstrous," began Lady Vernon. "And, of course——"

"One moment," he interrupted, lifting his finger suddenly, as something caught his eye outside the window. "I beg pardon a thousand times, but—but—yes—there they are!" exclaimed Mr. Tintern.

He had approached the window, and was pointing, with his extended hand, toward the terrace-walk before the house. "There, there, there, you see; it is, upon my life! Only look. You see, eh?"

He stepped backward a pace or two, a little into the shade.

Lady Vernon watched them darkly as they passed, and what Lady Vernon saw did not please her.

The young lady yielded a flower she had in her fingers to the young gentleman, who placed it in his button-hole over his heart, to which he pressed its stem with an expressive glance at her.

Lady Vernon changed colour a little, and looked down again on the table.

Quite unconscious of being observed at that moment, the young people passed on.

"She has always been perverse and ungovernable, always," said Lady Vernon, with cold bitterness; "and a want of self-restraint induces the violent and hysterical state in which she often is. I leave to other persons the task of explaining her whims and extravagances, her excursion to Cardyllion, and such eccentricities as that of her visit to the gallery last night, dressed as a lady's-maid."

"And a very humble sort of maid too," said Mr. Tintern. "And—what is one to think? *I* entirely agree with you. What can one say?"

Lady Vernon's large dark eyes, hollow and strangely tired now, were lowered to the little cluster of seals upon the table, with which the tip of her taper finger played softly. There was the same brilliant flush in each cheek, and an odd slight drawing of her handsome lips—a look like that of a person who witnesses a cruel but inevitable operation.

Lady Vernon is too proud to betray to Mr. Tintern the least particle of what she really suffers by the smallest voluntary sign.

It is not the belief that forms the desire, but the desire that shapes the belief. Little originates in the head. Nearly all has its inception in the heart. The brain is its slave, and does task-work. That which it is your interest or your wish to believe, you do believe. The thing you desire is the thing you will think. Men not only speak, but actually think well of those with whom they have a community of interest and profit, and evil of those who stand in their way. Government, by party, proceeds upon this ascertained law of humanity. As a rule, the brain does not lead. It is the instrument and the slave of the desire.

There is another occult force, a mechanical power, as it were, always formidably at the service of the devil and the soul. The inclined plane by which the mind glides imperceptibly from perversion into perjury.

I once heard an attorney of great ability and experience remark: "You may take it as a rule that in every case, if your client says an untruth in support of his own case, when the time comes for filing his affidavit he will also swear it."

It is the desire that governs the will, and the will the intellect. Let every man keep his heart, then, as he would his house, and beware how he admits a villain to live in it.

Mr. Tintern is a gentleman of sensitive honour and unexceptionable morality. Forty years ago, when duels were still fought, he perforated the Honourable Whiffle Newgate's hat with a pistol-bullet, for daring to call his veracity in question. And did he not proceed criminally against the radical county paper, simply to gain the opportunity of filing his affidavit, and afterwards of undergoing examination and cross-examination in the witness-box, in vindication of his probity?

And does not Lady Vernon walk this world a pattern and a reproach to sinners, and a paragon among the godly?

And, alas! is not the heart of man deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked? Something we can do for ourselves. Not a great deal, but still indispensable. As much as his friends could do for Lazarus. "Take ye away the stone," and when that is done, into the sepulchre enters the miraculous influence—actual life and light, and the voice of power, where before was the silence of darkness.

"It is all very painful, Mr. Tintern, miserably painful," she says faintly, still looking down. And then with a sigh she picks up the pretty little cluster of seals, and drops them into their place in the desk, and shuts it down and locks it.

CHAPTER XLI. LADY VERNON TAKES EVIDENCE.

When Mr. Tintern had taken his departure, with the comfortable feeling that he had done what was right, Lady Vernon sighed deeply.

"Mr. Tintern," she thought, "lives in castles of his own building. He is always thinking of poor papa's will, and the reversion of Roydon, and the money in the funds. If he knew all he would be easy enough respecting them. All the better he doesn't. I can't spare him yet. He is very sensitive about Maud's marrying. He exaggerates, I dare say. I'll see Maximilla; she tells truth. Poor Mr. Tintern can think of nothing but himself. How nervous he has made me! What business has Maud walking out alone with *him*? I think Maximilla might have prevented that. A selfish world. No, no, no! My God! it can't be. That would make me

mad—quite mad. If I could go back to childhood and die!"

She went to the window, but she did not any longer see Maud and Captain Vivian.

Her clouded dark eyes swept so much of the landscape as was visible from the window in which she stood, in vain.

She touched the bell, and her footman appeared.

"Have you seen Miss Medwyn?"

"Miss Medwyn is in the first drawing-room, my lady."

"Tell Miss Medwyn, please, that I'm coming to her in a moment," said Lady Vernon.

She got up and sighed heavily, with her hand pressed to her heart.

"Barbara, Barbara, you must command yourself. Say what they will, you can do that."

She frowned and shook her head a little, and so seemed to shake off the bewildered look that had settled on her features; and she resumed her usual air and countenance, except that she was very pale; and she walked serenely into the great drawing-room.

"Well, Maximilla, I have just got rid of my tiresome neighbour, Mr. Tintern, who has been boring me about fifty things, and I want you to tell me all about the ball last night, and I was so afraid you might run away before I had locked up my letters.

Miss Max lowered her little gold glasses and the newspaper she had been reading, and looked up from her chair near the window into Lady Vernon's face.

"Well, my dear, it was, I should say—you know it is four years, or five, since I was last at one of your Wymering balls; but I think it was a very good ball, and seemed to go off very spiritedly. There were the Wycombes, and the Heybrokes, and the Forresters, and the Gystans; and Hawkshawe was there." And so she went on with an enumeration interesting to county people, but scarcely so much so to others; and then she went into the events, and the soup, and the ices, and the flirtations, and the gossip of the chaperons. Lady Vernon now and then reviving a recollection, or opening a subject by a question.

"And how did Maud look?" she asked at last, carelessly.

"Perfectly lovely," answered Miss Max, with decision.

"Did she dance?"

"Not a great deal."

"About how many dances do you suppose?"

"I think she said, coming home, two quadrilles and three round dances."

"That was very little."

"Oh, I need not tell you she could have danced everything if she had liked," said Miss Max, complacently.

"To whom did she give the fast dances?" asks Lady Vernon.

"To Captain Vivian."

"Well, but there were three."

"All to Captain Vivian."

"Really? She must have been very rude, then, to other people," said Lady Vernon.

"It can't have pleased them, I fancy. Lord Heyduke, a very good-looking young man, and clever they say, looked so angry. I really thought he'd have been rude afterwards to Captain Vivian and old Lord Hawkshawe."

"That is so foolish of Maud," said Lady Vernon. "She knows nothing, absolutely, about Captain Vivian, except that he is gentleman-like and good-looking. But I happen to know that, over and above his commission, he has not three hundred a year in the world."

"But you know Maud, as well as I do, and that consideration is not likely to weigh with her for a moment," said Maximilla.

"She is so perverse," said Lady Vernon, darkening with great severity.

"Well, Barbara, it isn't all perversity. That kind of impetuosity runs very much in families, and you certainly did not marry for money."

"That is a kind reminder," said Lady Vernon, with a fierce smile. "I beg pardon for interrupting you, but some of my friends (you among them) know pretty well that I have never ceased to repent that one hasty step; and if I was a fool, as you remind me a little cruelly, I'd rather she regarded me in that great mistake of my life, not as an example, but as a warning; and certainly neither you nor I, at our years, should encourage her."

"She is the last person on earth to be either encouraged or discouraged by our opinions—mine, perhaps, I should say," answered Miss Max. "But don't let us quarrel about it, Barbara, for I rather think that upon this point we are both very nearly agreed."

Hereupon she very honestly related her reasons for thinking Captain Vivian very much in love with Maud, and added her opinion that, "unless she likes him, which I don't believe, and has made up her mind not to trifle with him, she ought not to encourage him."

Lady Vernon looked out of the window, and, still looking out, said carelessly:

"And you don't think there is anything in it?"

"I did not say that. I don't think it possible that a young man could be for so long in the same house without being impressed by her; she is so very beautiful: I should not be at all surprised if he were very much in love with her; and you know, my dear Barbara, if he has any ambition, and thinks himself an Adonis, what is likely to follow? As to Maud, my belief is she is not in love with him. I don't think she cares about him; but young ladies are so mysterious, I can only speak on conjecture, and she may—it is quite possible—she may like him. I should be sorry to take it on me to say positively she does not."

"It has set people talking, at all events," said Lady Vernon, carelessly, "and nothing could be more absurd. But, as you say, there may be nothing in it."

"I think, perhaps, it might not be amiss to let her go about a little to friends' houses, and make some visits, and she will soon forget him, if she ever cared about him. I should be delighted to have her, but I have promised so soon to go to Lady Mardykes', and I know she wishes ever so much to have Maud. She saw her at the Tinterns, and liked her so much, and I said I would ask you, and I think she could not visit at a better house. I'm to be with her in a fortnight or less, and I would meet her there. What do you say? Will you let her go?"

"I don't see anything very particular against it at present," said Lady Vernon, thinking. "But you know I have not seen her since her marriage, and all that fraud, I may call it, and violence, on Warhampton's part, has occurred since. I certainly should not have her here, nor any member of that family. But Maud may choose her friends for herself. I need not know them. I have reasons for not caring to send or take her to the Wycombes, or old Lady Heyduke's, or the Frogworths, or the Gystans, and a great many more I could name. I should prefer Lady Mardykes, and your being there at the same time would make me feel quite comfortable about her. We can talk it over, you and I, Max, by-and-bye."

And with a more cheerful countenance she left the room.

Miss Max had a little good-natured mischief in her, and was, if the truth were spoken, a little disappointed at the equanimity with which haughty, jealous Barbara took the news, the irritating nature of which she had been at no special pains to mitigate.

"She may smile as she pleases," she thought, looking after her as the door closed, "but I am certain she is nettled. I think she likes him, and I'm a little curious to see what she will do."

THE THOUGHTS OF FISHES.

Birds and beasts think. Why shouldn't fishes also think?

When a knowing old pointer is sent into the turnip-fields with a shocking bad shot, he soon arrives at his own conclusions. Regarding the sportsman with a look of contempt, he sets him down as a very poor stick on finding shot fired after shot without bringing down a bird, and thinks it is not worth taking the trouble to point any longer for such a muff.

When Jenny Wren has half-finished a nest, she looks at it critically, and thinks to herself, "No, this won't do. The twigs won't support it properly; it will tumble on one side." She begins another, and when that is half done, she looks at it, and after reflection says, "That won't do either. The foundation is good, but the situation is much too exposed. Silly little short-sighted thing that I was, I did not notice the footpath close at hand, on which birds'-nesting schoolboys go to and fro." So she begins a third, and finding it satisfactory in every respect—support, situation, shelter—she finishes it, and fills it with her tiny brood.

In like manner, when you drag the lake in your park, or the pond in your pasture, for the purpose of tasting a dish of stewed carp, you surround your "finny tribes" with a circle of network, till escape from it seems impossible. But look at that fine fellow with his snout just out of the water, smelling at the corks that float your nets. "He thinks he has me," says Cyprinus to himself, "and is settling in his mind with what sauce he will eat me. I think he hasn't me. I wish he may get me!" Then, going back to make a better leap, he makes a rush to the front, clears the net as cleanly as the winning horse at a steeple-chase clears the last hurdle, and, imitating human diplomatists who wish to avoid putting in their appearance, forthwith takes to his bed in the mud.

The psychological faculties of fishes have been underrated, because it has been supposed that they do not sleep, and consequently that if they never sleep they are never very wide awake. True, fishes cannot shut their eyes, but we have heard of people sleeping with one eye open, who were not the stupidest of their race. And surely if any living creature is under the necessity of taking rest in that uncomfortable way, it is a fish. Fishes are friendless in the world; every fish is every other fish's enemy; every fish's mouth is opened against every other fish. How many fishes, not per cent, but per million, die quietly in their beds a natural death? The number must be infinitesimally small, if not an absolute nullity.

The cause of this cruel fate is simple. The sea contains little besides fishes to eat, and, with little else to eat, fish must eat fish. They wage an internecine warfare, more reasonable than the battles of civilised belligerents. To kill men for the sake of eating them, as the New Zealanders and Sandwich Islanders have done from time immemorial, is an explicable, logical, and accountable practice. Such wars have a clear and assignable reason why. But to kill men by hundreds of thousands, only to bury them, or perhaps to leave them to rot unburied, infecting the survivors with pestilence, is absurdity, folly, and wastefulness, peculiar to certain terrestrial bipeds. In the sea nothing is wasted, its inhabitants kill to eat; they do not kill for killing's sake. If a seal take a bite out of one salmon for breakfast, another bite out of another for dinner, and a cut from the middle of a third for supper; if a shark does the same with dolphins and bonitos, there is nothing lost to the general commissariat of the ocean. The remnants serve to feed less active and less powerful members of the marine society; they are the crumbs that fall from the rich man's table. Seals and sharks are fish-butchers and sportsmen, who aid the feebler population of the deep with a small supply. True, there are seaweeds to serve as food, but the number of purely herbivorous fishes is small. Seaweeds supply fish-food indirectly by sustaining shell-fish and the like, which become the prey of full-grown fish, and by harbouring animalcules which supply welcome nutriment to the minor fry. Every atom of organised matter in the sea is utilised in one way or another.

A fish's existence ought to be one of intense excitement, a life of ardent pursuit or desperate flight. The needful intervals of repose are perfectly possible. Even in mountain streams, that leap from rock to rock, there are deep calm pools in which, if clear, you can see trout lying as still as stones. As, in a gale of wind, there are buildings, trees, and banks of earth, behind which shelter can be found, so, in the course of rushing rivers, there are bends and eddies, blocks of stone, and beds of water-weeds, where the wayworn fish, tired with the gymnastic exercises by which he earns his daily bread, may find a temporary resting-place. It may sound paradoxical, but in salt water, quiet is even more easily found than in fresh. However the surface may be lashed by tempests, to reach a calm, the fish has only to descend, and by so doing reaches another means of safety—darkness. It appears that at the bottom of the great deep absolute stillness reigns. Minute shells that sink from the top to the bottom are found to be without the slightest abrasion or injury, and quite unmixed with sand or gravel. There is not current enough in those depths to disturb a particle of down if it could reach them. There is a delicate white-fleshed fish, the ferrat, peculiar to the Lake of Geneva and one or two other Swiss waters, which can only be caught when it comes to the surface, at the season when it takes a fancy to see the world. It passes the rest of the year in strict retirement, at the bottom of those indigo depths. Do we suppose that it cannot sleep there quietly, a week at a time if so disposed, slumbering, perhaps even dreaming a little, undisturbed, except when the great lake trout, the salmo-ferox, now and then swoops down upon it, like an eagle from the watery sky, and immediately takes its upward flight with a drowsy ferrat in its hooked under-jaw?

Hunger, one of the prime motives of action in the life of every animated creature, presses, we have seen, with peculiar stress on fishes, and necessarily sharpens their faculties. For most of them, there is nothing to eat but fish; they are ichthyophagous, whether they will or no. They have, at the same time, to catch, and to avoid being caught. It has been said that, in fishes, the brain is too small to allow them a large share of intelligence. But phrenology is scarcely applicable to this division of the animal kingdom. The structure of a fish's brain is quite different in plan to that of a quadruped's; but who can say that it is not wisely adapted to a fish's condition? In mam-

malia and birds, the brain presents a homogeneous mass, circumvolved and wound, as it were, round itself, like a ball of thread. The brains of fishes appear to be unwound, and are developed into a series of lobes, like a double string of beads. And then, their brains do not fill their brain-boxes, as ours do. They float in the midst of a sort of jelly. In consequence of this they receive, without injury, a much more violent blow than a bird or a quadruped. The concussion is deadened before it reaches the brain. One favourite way of killing eels is to knock them, not on the head, but on the tail, where, it appears, part of their susceptibilities are centred.

Apropos to which, the tails of eels prove that they are acquainted with at least one of the mechanical powers. M. Le Paute, the conservator of the Bois de Vincennes, one day had the fancy to put a number of tiny eels into an aquarium containing a population of very small salmon. A short time afterwards the eels were all gone. What had become of them? Had the salmon eaten them? It was not unlikely.

To make sure, he put a certain number of each in a bell-glass of water, which he covered with a plate and then reversed, so that the glass of water stood on the plate. By this arrangement all escape seemed prevented. Not so, however. After trying in vain with their heads, the little eels inserted the tips of their tails into the narrow chink between the glass and the plate, and so squeezed themselves out backwards. They knew the consequences of forcing in the thin end of a wedge.

Nor are the senses of fishes blunt, as some suppose. In many their olfactory organs receive impressions by means of four nostrils, instead of the two vouchsafed to the rest of the world. Their eyes are large in proportion to those of birds and quadrupeds. In some the eye is enormously developed, giving the fish a popular name. In the streets of Havre the fish-women cry, not "Dorades," but "Gros yeux, gros yeux!" "Big eyes, big eyes!" The globe-lens of American photographers is copied from a fish's eye. The visual angle of fishes is very great; the eyeball is gifted with such mobility that it can look before or behind, upwards or downwards. There are even fishes which can look two ways at once. The hippocampus's eyes are independent of each other; one eye can ogle a lady hippocampus gracefully sailing to the right, while the other eye jealously surveys the movements of a rival on the left.

A fish's ear is simpler than our own; but the worthies who undervalue it as less perfect, forget the fact that fishes swim in water. Sound travels in air at the rate of about eleven hundred, and in fresh water at the same temperature at nearly five thousand feet per second; in sea-water still more rapidly. That is to say, a fish hears a distant sound more than four times as quickly as we humans do. The sense of taste in fishes is supposed to be dull; but there is no apparent reason why it should be duller than with birds. And yet birds discriminate. The vulture prefers his carrion high, while the eagle stipulates for fresh-slain meat; the hen will leave bread-crumbs for a nice red worm, and the siskin may be taught tricks by tempting it with hempseed. Fishes may taste their food pleasantly, as we sometimes do ours unpleasantly, for a considerable time after they have swallowed it. And if not gastronomers of the purest water, fishes at least enjoy the blessings of a good appetite and an easy digestion. What a comfort to be able, like the cod, to eat a hearty dinner of crabs, shells and all!

As to feeling, people fancy fishes can't feel, simply because they do not scream when hurt. A cod takes his crimping philosophically, and eels are so used to being skinned alive that they rather like it. So say cooks and fishermen. If we gagged our garroters while receiving their due of cat-o'-nine-tails, their silence would lead to a similar inference, namely, that pain was not included in their list of sensations.

That fishes are tameable is notorious, from innumerable examples of carp and gold-fish. The minnow may be easily tamed, so as to come to the surface of the water, and take a worm held between the finger and thumb. The tame codfish of Galloway have often been quoted. In the fish-ponds belonging to the establishment at Concarneau, the turbot supplied there with board and lodging, until it is their turn to travel to the Paris market, recognise their keeper's footstep. At the whistle which announces their dinner hour, they quit the bottom, in which they lay hid with their eyes and gills only uncovered by mud and sand, and rise to the surface, where, with a rapid and undulating movement, they seize and make off with the portions of fish doled out to them. On the other hand, fishes are more cunning and distrustful the more they are angled for. Experience teaches them to beware of the presence of biped enemies. The

fact is certain, indisputable. Parisian anglers are well aware, that the fishes in the Seine and the Marne are much more difficult to catch than those which live in out-of-the-way streams in out-of-the-way departments. Why? Because they are angled for Sunday and working-day, from morning till night, and from night till morning.

Nevertheless, fishes have their weaknesses, as instanced, in the case of the roach, by Monsieur H. De la Blanchère, the author of an interesting little book* which has served as the text of the present discourse. Roach-fishing is a veritable trial, not of strength, but of finesse, between the angler and the angled. When the wind meddles with the business, it is often the angled who gets the best of it, while the angler has his trouble for his pains. It would be too much to assert that the roach is a glutton; but it is only doing him justice to say that he is an epicure. How were his favourite dishes discovered? How? We can only suppose, by some lucky accident. It was at Essones, near Paris, that our author by chance found out a marvellous roachy preparation. His preceptor was a boy belonging to the factory.

One fine morning he had taken his place at the foot of some old poplars, which form a tuft of verdure at one of the bends of the little stream. A lad, in the traditional schoolboy's blouse, with a wide-awake countenance and hair dishevelled like a misty comet, came and sat himself down without ceremony at a few paces' distance. Forthwith, he threw into the water a primitive line fastened to the end of a rod, which might have been a French beanstick snatched in haste from the paternal haricot garden.

The amateur stared sullenly while the young rogue was filling his bag with roach after roach, and casting a knowing look now and then at the elaborate baits and diverse worms, unsuccessfully employed by his fellow-fisherman. Every minute, a roach swung in mid-air, and after describing a graceful curve was dancing on the grass.

Every angler—every man of common human feeling—will guess that, from that moment, our angler's most ardent wish was to know what potent bait the boy employed. After every catch, he took out of his pocket a flat and thin piece of some white substance, off which he tore a little bit and then returned the rest to its hiding-place.

Curiosity was stretched to the utmost; but dignity kept curiosity in check. For no earthly consideration would the baffled inquirer have asked his vanquisher for information, so vexed and humiliated was he at finding a child checkmating him with so little ceremony. Chance—the good genius of fishermen—at last came to his assistance. His young friend caught sight of a passing playmate, and shouted:

"He'! 'sidore! He'! Tell m'man to make me a pancake. Mine is finished."

The secret was out. The instant that a pancake was mentioned, the answer to the enigma was given. Our fisherman slyly stepped into a cottage hard by, and found the good woman, busy preparing the roach's pastry.

"By St. Peter—the patron of fishermen—I have it!" the enlightened amateur exclaimed with delight. "Nevertheless, I am bound to consider whether I ought to divulge the secret and rob myself of its sole possession, for the benefit of the angling fraternity. There is matter here for ample reflection; but generosity before egotism. All men are brothers, and it is as well to be influenced by that fact in a matter of such vital importance. Here then is the receipt! Stir a little water into a large tablespoonful of flour, add a pinch of salt; pour this paste into a frying-pan slightly greased. Let it fry till it is set, white not brown. Turn it, let the other side fry white. Serve hot, and carry it off in your waistcoat-pocket." With a pancake manufactured by the mother, the angler returned and unblushingly entered into competition with the son. To what unscrupulous acts will not human passion lead! He soon showed the poor lad that, thanks to the pancake, he knew as much about roach-fishing as he did—perhaps more. His conscience, however, was not quite easy, so he atoned for his treachery by presenting the lad with some Limerick hooks. Then, packing up his traps, he strolled back to his lodging, and after supping off roach, slept the sleep of the just.

The roach practises a system of mutual instruction. On the banks of the Loir—please not to confound le Loir with la Loire—there stands an abbey. Opposite the abbey, in the midst of the meadows, some cold springs of purest water break out, and uniting, hasten to join the Loir in a broad, shallow, chilly stream which is known in the neighbourhood as the Gué-Froid, the Cold Ford, and is the resort of whole shoals of magnificent roach. Now fish have their perversities, as well as men; and not a

* L'Esprit des Poissons, par H. De la Blanchère. Paris, P. Brunel, editeur, 31, Rue Bonaparte. 1870.

single angler, for miles round about, could ever get a fish to take a hook in the Gué-Froid. One June morning, M. De la Blanchère resolved to try, employing a mode of fishing unknown in those parts, and consequently unknown to the fish of the place.

Every kind of fishing was practised there except fly-fishing, which determined him to make the experiment, with a fine kitchen blue-bottle stuck on the barb of his hook. Scarcely had it touched the water before one, two, three, ten, twenty, fifty roach, passed, one after the other, into his basket, until it made his shoulders ache. He returned as proud as—well, Lucifer. But nobody would believe he had caught *that* in the Gué-Froid.

The only way to convince the incredulous, was to take them with him, one by one, and by revealing the secret, enable them to have the same success, which was what he did.

The first time, he and his friend had a less abundant catch than when he tried the trick alone. Nevertheless, the sport was not bad. They each of them took some thirty roach. Everybody was now convinced, as well they might be.

Next day, he returned to the Gué-Froid with fourteen companions. He got six roach; nobody else got anything.

The day after, twenty anglers went to work. Everybody's share was—exactly nothing at all. The roach had completed their education.

All fish, therefore, are not absolute fools. But we should know much more about fish than we do if every angler were a savant, which would become oppressive to the reading public, or if every savant were an angler, which might be harder lines on fishes than they really deserve.

AN EVENING AT MOPETOWN.

THERE is a class of persons who live by their wits, and whose condition seems, above all others, deserving of pity. These are the poor wanderers who entertain us, who spend their lives posting wearily from country town to country town, dragging along the few traps with which they set up their show. Some are highly prosperous: have made friends and connexions, and can always confidently rely on plenty of patronage. But there are other poor stragglers who creep into Mopetown on their first visit; who secure the "Rooms" at the Mechanics' Institute with as fluttering a heart as though they were throwing dice; and who, according to the rules of such places, are obliged to deposit a sum for hire and gas, before they can open the doors. With these it is often a perfect lottery: heads, meaning a small fortune of two pounds ten: tails, beggary, and forfeiture of the meagre properties and stock.

We have all of us, through various accidents, been forced to stay at various Mopetowns, up and down the kingdom—a place of two or three straggling streets winding up a hill, to where the railway station is planted. It is sometimes in the South, sometimes in the North; but wherever it lies, we are sure to see on the railway arch, or the gloomy blue stone wall that skirts the road, the "posters" of these jocund "entertainers" whose whole life is given up to coaxing a rough and churlish public to be amused. No more dismal life can be imagined than that of these unhappy beings, whose very appearance is utterly opposed to their professed calling, and who ruefully bear about with them such jovial miscellanies as the Wallet of Wit—Mirth and Momus—Two Hours of Shakespearian Vagaries, and the like. The more florid and gorgeous the programmes that greet us as we trundle into Mopetown, the more desponding do they leave us; though in the flamboyant and exciting pictures of flying horses, and noble gymnasts, who seem like inferior mythological heroes (and indeed we have seen frescoes of inferior merit), there is, it is true, always something dashing and noble.

Once being forced to remain a night at Mopetown, I found on the table of the Dolphin coffee-room a number of little programmes, note-paper size, setting forth an entertainment for that very night. I give it "textually," as our distracted neighbours across the Channel would say:

THE ROOMS, MOPETOWN.

Under distinguished patronage. For two nights only.

MRS. MOUNTAIN,

Formerly preceptress in the family of Sir JAMES SADDLETREE, Bart., whose youthful family she had the honour of grounding in the refining branches of education, will give

TWO READINGS,

The first from Shakespeare's Masterpiece,

KING JOHN!

As read by her at Saddletree, during Christmas, 1847, in presence of Sir James Saddletree, Bart., and family, of the High Sheriff, and an élite party of guests.

This noble play has been specially prepared—all indelicacies removed—while the characters of King John, Constance, Falconbridge, and Hubert, will be called up before the spectator in a life-like manner by

MRS. MOUNTAIN.

Mrs. Mountain will take the opportunity of introducing her daughter,

MISS THEODORA MOUNTAIN,

Who will recite the soul-stirring

CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE!

With other pieces.

Places may be secured at the Rooms, where also may be seen the testimonial referring to Mrs. Mountain's connexion with Sir James Saddletree, Bart.

*** Carriages to set down with the horses' heads towards Pump-lane. And gentlemen are requested to give their coachmen instructions accordingly.

Grotesque as was this bill of fare, and probable as it was that the performance would correspond to this odd promise, I yet felt a sort of uneasiness that it was too late to secure a place, and that my money might be refused at the doors. Hurriedly setting out, I made my way to the "Rooms"—a new, staring, plastery, uncomfortable place, too obviously, like such places all the kingdom over, groaning under a load of debt, and presenting a most unprosperous appearance. I entered up spacious steps, into a white, illuminated roominess, which is another characteristic of such places. My footsteps echoed, and the sense of desertion was almost painful. The entertainment must have begun. "No, I was quite in time," I was assured by the person who took money.

It was the "smaller hall," with glaring white walls, white gallery, deal smelling floor, and a vast crowd—not of people, alas! but of pale, spindly cane-bottomed chairs, clustered together helplessly, like lean geese. On the front row—the "reserved seats"—sat the clergyman and his wife—the sole tenants of that sacred enclosure. In the seats of the second dignity were a severe-looking father and mother, and a governess; while in the "body of the hall," as it was entitled, half a dozen homely and honest-looking folk clung convulsively to the barrier, which separated them from the nobler portion of the area, and seemed to be too scared by the hollow sound of their own footsteps to move about. There were three or four stray people looking down from the gallery, as from a deck. As I entered, every head was screwed round to survey me. The rostrum or platform was flanked by two new deal doors, unpainted by reason of the exhausted state of the funds of the concern, and a sort of sepulchral or sacrificial table, with one candle, was set out in the centre. The look of that gaunt and deserted platform affected me with the strangest mixture of feelings: the meagrely ascetic air, the general bareness, forcibly suggested the block and scaffold—an impending surgical operation—a severe pass examination. The time for commencing was past by some minutes, when there entered, with noisy and decisive tread, a tall, officer-like man, who looked round ruefully at the prison-like desolation into which he had entered. A soft whisper, which the vast echoes of the room enlarged into loud speech, was borne to us from behind, to the effect that this was "Captain Spunner." It was getting more and more desolating; we grew impatient, as did the sole stick and umbrella present, which feebly protested. At last one of the deal doors opened.

A tall and rather pretty young girl led in a severe-looking elderly lady, with a front of grey curls fixed at each side of her head, much as "winkers" are on a horse. She carried her book in her hand, and surveyed the audience with an air of disdainful severity. The clergyman and his wife, who had, by-the-bye, the air of "orders," applauded in a friendly but patronising way. But she would not relax her severity. The tall young girl, who was dressed in white, with a broad blue ribbon of the Garter across her, came forward to address us, in a quiet, composed manner.

"My mamma wishes me to say," were her words, "that she is about to read the tragedy of King John, exactly as she read it at Saddletree, in the year 1847, before a distinguished audience. My mamma also wishes me to state that everything improper or indelicate has been removed, and that there will be nothing heard to-night that could bring a blush into the cheek of the youngest child present."

It was impossible to laugh, she said this with such earnestness and sincerity, though the officer grinned, and stared through his glass. Then the young lady sat down in a chair at the side, while her mamma deliberately wiped her tortoise-shell glasses, and finding much difficulty in arranging the light, at last placed the candle between herself and the book, and, after a severe look round, began her task.

Poor soul! It was one low "mumble," very slow and deliberate, much as she would have read out a domestic letter, and was quite inaudible in the gallery. After a quarter of an hour of this murmuring, a blunt voice came from the gallery, "Speak up, marm, please!" and filled us all with consternation. It proceeded from an honest-faced operative, leaning on his elbows, and utterly indifferent to the concentrated gaze of the half-dozen faces in the select rows now turned full on him.

The old lady stopped. Her daughter rose and came forward.

"My mamma," she said, softly, "is suffering from a cold to-night, and is forbidden by the physicians to exert herself in the level passages. As the occasions of the tragedy require it, she will endeavour to do justice to the grand scenes illustrated by the genius of Mrs. Siddons and her brother the late John Philip Kemble."

In homage to these illustrious names the umbrella and stick involuntarily made noise —also in indignant protest at the interruption. The operative was awe-stricken; though I fancy he must have referred the allusion to the "level passages," to the approaches of the building. After this episode the old lady resumed her task, in rather a lower voice than before.

It began to grow rather depressing. Twenty minutes more went by; the clergyman fell asleep. Suddenly, with an audible yawn of impatience, the officer rose, and tramped steadily and leisurely down the hall, throwing down *the* umbrella, which projected at an angle. But the reproof he received was masterly. The reader stopped deliberately, wiped her glasses, and followed his retreating form with her eyes all down the hall, until it disappeared through the furthest doorway. She then resumed. We dared not budge, she had us so completely under her despotism. But, by the time we reached the conclusion of the first act, it was apparent that things could not be protracted further, and, after a little whispering, the young lady came forward.

"My mamma bids me say that she is too exhausted to repeat any more of Shakespeare's tragedy of King John, or go beyond the level passages to-night. Her physicians have warned her against working up the exciting scenes of this great tragedy. With your permission we will proceed to the second part of the performance."

At this news we all re-settled ourselves in our places, making the attenuated legs of the cane-bottomed chairs scream on the new floor. The relief was something delicious: the clergyman woke up, and we looked forward to something refreshing. After arranging her blue ribbon, and receiving many directions from the elderly lady, who was regarding us severely, with her glasses ready for action, the young lady came forward.

"My mamma," she said, "wishes me to recite for you a poem which she composed at Stalybridge. The merchants at Stalybridge, when my mamma was taken ill there, were very kind to us; and to put on record her sense of their goodness, my mamma wrote the following lines."

The severe old lady here pulled her daughter to her, and whispered for a minute, nodding and frowning.

"And my mamma wishes me to add, that they were afterwards published in the Stalybridge Mercury, and much admired."

She then delivered eight or ten stanzas, of which the following, or nearly the following, was a specimen:

Merchants of Stalybridge! Stalybridge merchants!
Kindly and excellent men.
Hearts full of feeling, as full as your purses,
Lavish, again and again!
The world it is cold—as empty as cold,
Ungrateful and hollow to see.
Though ne'er we may meet, I shall never forget,
How kindly you've acted to me.
Merchants of Stalybridge!
Merchants of Stalybridge!
Stalybridge merchants!

At the third stanza, and when the burden recurred, "Merchants of Stalybridge, Stalybridge merchants!" a sort of hysterical merriment came on me, and I felt that, if the burden came again—which it must do—exposure of a disgraceful order would take place. It did recur: and I disgraced myself. The tortoise-shell glasses were instantly levelled—it seemed like an order for the police to remove me—I grew red in the face, exploded once, and while the young lady paused, rose abruptly and fled.

SEA SONG.

Call not the old life back, oh sea,
In the grave where it lies there let it be,
Wake not the pale ghost up for me;
Call not the dead love back.

Bid not the tranquil pulses throng,
To tumult and passion, fret and wrong,
Hush the sad memories in thy song,
Call not the dead love back.

Was not its brief life full of pain,
Of weary waiting and struggle vain?
Bid it not waken to weep again,
Call not the dead love back.

Lurid and bright was its morning ray,
Fierce was the glare of its noontide sway,
Cold o'er its death closed the gloaming grey,
Call not the dead love back.

There let it lie in its fatal charm,
With its closen eye and its folded palm;
There let it lie in its solemn calm,
Call not the dead love back.

Sing of the upwards glorious power,
Sing of the present's harvest hour,
Sing of the future's golden dower,
Call not the dead love back.

Sing on, sing on, in thy mighty chime,
Of the world to come and its joys sublime,
But, oh! in the terrible name of Time,
Call not the dead love back.

Sing of the work that is waiting still,
For the earnest hand and the steady will,
Of the great crusade against want and ill,
Oh sea, call nothing back.

MAY-DAY AMONG THE MULES.

It had been an old promise that I should, before finally leaving the south of France, spend a May-day at Oloron for the purpose of seeing the great mule fair held there. Accordingly, on the 30th of April, 1868, we started from Pau, stopping to lunch at Belair, so celebrated for its beautiful view of the neighbouring mountains. While waiting at the inn up drove a Pau acquaintance in the person of the Marquis de Cherizet, out of whose pony-carriage was lifted a square box, which proved to contain a poor little bearling of about a month old, whose mother had been shot and itself captured, the day before, in the mountains near Urdos: and very sulky and strange the poor little orphan looked, as we peered at him through the bars, which confined him to his extemporised prison.

From Belair to Oloron the drive is very beautiful, and it was enlivened by the freaks and antics of the mules we passed, whose owners were bringing them from all parts for the sale of next day, for by far the greater number of these animals seen in Spain, and called Spanish, are in reality reared on the French side of the Pyrenees.

At the old-fashioned inn we were welcomed by the five spinster sisters, joint hostesses of the Hôtel Soustalot, who have not yet abandoned the gracious old custom of attending in person, to welcome the coming, and speed the parting guest. We declined the rooms first offered to us, perceiving that being over the portail which formed an archway over the road, all the mules and muleteers would have to pass underneath, on their way from the Basse to the Hauteville, where the fair was to take place next day; and their incessant tramping throughout the night would be but a bad preparation for a hard day's sight-seeing; so we took up our quarters in a queer little excrescence of a room, built out from the house, so as to have three windows and three aspects, commanding respectively the river, the ridge on which the oldest part of the town is built, and a steep bank with an escarped road thronged by a grotesque procession of Spaniards in their strange costumes, Béarnais peasants in their more sober dresses, horses, mules, donkeys, pigs, and sheep. I could watch this dissolving view from the window through a light green screen, formed by a young plane-tree which grew just before it. Oloron is quite the town of plane-trees, which grow everywhere, forming most delectable shady boulevards and allées, their curiously blistered trunks giving a sickly yellow green tint to the chequered sunlight. At this time of the year they afford shelter to innumerable nightingales, who in this country sing as much by day as by night, and keep up what our pretty little waitress (who, I suppose, thought nothing could be charming but herself) called a "vilain tapage."

The table d'hôte dinner followed, the cuisine and service, though extremely simple, being clean and quite sufficiently good. The five sisters officiate as waitresses, an arrangement which must go far towards rendering their hôtel profitable. The repast was somewhat dull. A lady would appear to be an unusual apparition, and the effect of my presence seemed to depress the company, chiefly composed of commis-voyageurs, to a point fully justifying Sir Walter Scott's remark on the invariable stupidity of their English brethren. Silently the meal progressed; the only talker being, fortunately for me, my immediate neighbour, whom I found an intelligent and pleasant man, and who afterwards procured us useful information as to an expedition we were planning to make in the Val d'Aspe.

The following morning we breakfasted at eight o'clock on tea and trout, before mounting the zigzag road, in company with strings of mules and pigs, to the Hauteville. The day was roasting hot, but the little plane-planted Place was a delightful refuge from the rays of the sun. Thus early there was no crowd within its precincts, and I could observe at leisure the curious scene. Encircling the wall, and crowding over it, were innumerable heads of mules, donkeys, horses, and ponies, many deep, forming a queer, fantastic kind of setting to the green oval Place. There was remarkably little struggling or movement. Their places once taken, the patient beasts stood gazing longingly with their soft brown eyes into the cool, shady plane grove, giving but small sign of life, save by the switching of their tails and the twitching of their long ears. The owners hovered near, sat on the wall, or bestrode the animals, but at this stage there appeared to be but little business doing. The fair lasts three days.

Imagine what a reign of obstinacy, a three days' mule and pig fair! These last appeared to give the most trouble, and their grunting remonstrances against the coercion they were subjected to, were very vehement in the neighbouring street.

The shouts of the public cheese-weigher, however, took my attention from the doleful complaints of the pigs, and I watched with some interest the operation by which each mountaineer ascertains, for the sum of one sou, the precise weight of his store of cheese. The contents of the cradle in which the cheeses are carried, duly weighed and ticketed, and the sou paid, a presiding sergent de ville presents him with a corresponding certificate; and off he marches to another quarter to dispose of his goods as he best may.

A doleful whining bleat, close by, betrayed some unfortunate black and white lambs lying in groups under the trees, ready for sale. Each small beast formed a tiny triangle, his luckless little legs being tied together at an angle with his outstretched head and tail; each woolly coat was marked by the owner in some fantastic way or colour. I never saw so ghastly an effect, as that produced by smearing with blue the eyes of the black lambs.

A really very pretty little pony was offered to me for sixty francs, which would have been worth at least four times that amount in England.

A good-natured limonadière lent me a chair, and while I was drinking some of her lemonade, I was violently assaulted by a small gipsy urchin to whom I had been rash enough to give a handful of bon-bons earlier in the day. He poked his brown little fist into my "poca," and on its being ejected, he proceeded to abuse and to cuff me, with all his five-year-old strength. That filthy, half-naked, unkept Bohemian family formed a strong contrast to their surroundings, and presented precisely the foil wanted by an artist's eye to the well-dressed, prosperous crowd. There was the old hag of a grandmother, her wrinkles black with dirt, grabbing with her long horny fingers at her impish grandchildren, as they darted mischievously in and out among the bystanders, while the handsome mother looked on with the expression of a wild beast, half silly, half savage, unable or unwilling to check her young barbarians as they audaciously filched nuts and plums from the stalls.

About twelve o'clock luncheon groups began to form, and something like society to be enjoyed by the fair-goers. Here half a dozen peasants discussed their business and their cold omelette, seated in a row on the wall, only interrupted by the necessity of administering gentle raps on the smooth moist nose of a pertinaciously hungry mule, who totally disregarded such abusive remonstrances as "Enfant gâté tais-toi." Spaniards lounged on the sunny south wall, or crowded the windows of surrounding cabarets, whence they had a good view of their prospective purchases. Mountaineers wearing wide shady bérets, looking, in their huge peaked bernouses, and with their long hair streaming over their shoulders, like figures out of Stothard's Canterbury Pilgrims, relieved guard, so as to allow their bright-fichued womenkind to rest and refresh themselves, after their weary watching of the mules. Tenderly and affectionately many petted the beasts they hoped so soon to lose.

Miniature carters and drovers, in and below their teens, herded together in this spare hour to narrate their adventures and to compare their fairings. As one glanced at their strongly marked features and square-built little forms, be-béreted and be-bloused precisely like their elders, as they stood cracking their whips with mimic force, one remarked how truly the Basque and Béarnais child is father to the man. Swarthy well-dressed girls flocked into the Plane Place to see whether there was any prospect of dancing. This, I was told by my friend the lemonade vender, would depend on whether "suffisamment de jeunessse" assembled. I conclude this did not prove the case, as there were no signs of a ball when we left the Hauteville, at twelve o'clock. We sauntered through the crowded town before returning to the inn, and greatly admired some of the mules and horses, especially two young bays, which would make beautiful ladies' horses a year hence. The moment we were observed to look at a horse, his owner or groom would commonly produce a crumpled piece of paper, which proved to be a certificate from the Haras, telling his pedigree and age.

The Spanish costumes disappointed me in number and brilliancy. One farmer, indeed, I saw so well and cleanly dressed, that I coveted his long mauve sash, so difficult to find in France, where the orthodox colour for sashes is red or green. Touching it with one hand, and holding my purse in the other, I offered to buy it; but he marched away, either offended or not understanding my meaning.

We came upon a fine old Norman church now used as a warehouse for lamb-skins. This, however, is not the profanation it at first sight appears. The altar above, in a Roman Catholic country, constitutes the consecrated part of a church, and this being removable at pleasure, leaves the church, so to speak, disconsecrated. The hides of lambs are prepared and made into gloves, which are here honestly sold as gants d'Agneau, but which I recognised as being the same sort of glove bought by poor deluded folk at Pau and Bayonne, as kid. Other articles of commerce here are linen, crimson sashes, checked fichus, and iron. A large number of young men and women are employed at Oloron in wool-stapling. The shops are unpretending but good, and arranged with taste. The porcelain tiles largely sold here form a very pretty feature in the shop windows. A less pleasing merchandise is wicker traps, much resembling the bottoms of baskets, made here for sale, as we were told, among Spaniards. We begged to know what could be entrapped by such clumsy means, and were assured that they were invaluable for insertion in beds to secure immunity from bugs! The necessity for such contrivances does not give a pleasant impression of our Spanish neighbours. Having walked about long enough, we returned to the inn to lunch, and then drove to St. Christau de Lurbe, a small watering-place lately brought into notice by its new proprietor, the Comte de Barrante. The five miles drive along a natural terrace shaded by oak and beech is lovely. From it we could see the first part of the road to the Val d'Aspe, running along an almost parallel crest. We overtook numbers of peasants returning on their donkeys to Lurbe and neighbouring villages, with their purchases made at the grande foire; including lambs, who would certainly rejoice when they had attained the end of their journey. Each miserable little quadruped was squeezed down into one end of the long striped purse-like market bag, used by the Béarnais peasant. This was slung through the girths of the donkey, and out of the slit mouths at each end, the poor little beasts' heads protruded and peered piteously, close to the dangling and spurred heels of the riders. The modern St. Christau consists of a cluster of houses and buildings connected with the establishment, and has a very park-like appearance. It is prettily laid out with walks and avenues, and is for a small watering-place one of the most attractive I have seen in the Pyrenees. The only large buildings are an hôtel kept by a Spaniard, and two bath houses. There are, besides Comte de Barrante's own pretty châlet, two smaller ones for letting.

The Commandery of the Knights Hospitallers of St. Christau was situated in ancient times between Lurbe and Eysus, and was closely connected with the monastery of St. Christine, of which the ruins may still be seen from Urdos.

This religious house was either founded or re-established about the year 1126, by Gaston the Fourth, Vicomte de Béarn. His father it was who rebuilt the town and cathedral of Oloron, or, as it was anciently called, Illurona, or Civitas Elloronensium. A worthy son of this same Centulle the Fourth, Gaston's first thought on returning from the Crusades was to benefit Béarn by spending his newly-acquired riches in founding and endowing various religious establishments. Not only at the siege of Jerusalem had Gaston distinguished himself, but he had proved himself so valuable an ally to Alphonse le Bataillant, King of Navarre and Arragon, in his conquest of Saragossa, that King Alphonse conferred on him the title of "Segnor in Saragoza." By this elevation Gaston also acquired the title of first "Ricombre" of Saragossa; a dignity which, it would appear, raised the possessor to a position little short of equality with the king. The children of the "Ricombres" bore the name of "Infants," and the chevaliers in their service of "Cavalieros de Honor;" and the king in return for their services was obliged to take counsel with the "Ricombres" in every important matter of government. Gaston spent ten years in his "Ricombrerie," at Saragossa, before returning to his native Béarn. To none of his new foundations did he so especially devote himself as to the monastery of St. Christine, whose position on the summit of the highest mountain, commanding the entrance to the Port d'Aspe on the road to Jaca and Saragossa, gave it great importance. It afforded a blessed refuge to pilgrims, merchants, and peasants, surprised by winter storms in these dangerous passes. The neighbouring commandery had a monastery attached to it in connexion with that of St. Christine, both of which assumed the arms of the Knights of St. Christau, viz., a white pigeon with a cross in its beak. The following legend is told as the origin of these armorial bearings. The workmen who were employed to build the monastery were baffled in several attempts to lay the foundations, owing to

the special difficulties presented by the soil, and position of the site first chosen. No better fortune attended the second and third venture, and the builders were in despair, when one morning they perceived a white pigeon bearing a cross in its beak. They pursued the bird, which perched on a box-tree, but though it flew away on their near approach, they found in the branches the cross it had left. They took this as a good omen, and proceeded successfully to lay the foundations on the spot where the tree had stood. On the altar was carved the blessed sign and its winged bearer, which later became also the convent arms.

A somewhat similar story to that of Prince Bladud's discovery of the virtues of the Bath waters, is told of the St. Christau springs. The discoverer is supposed to have been a neatherd who lived about the year A.D. 1300, and to have belonged to the despised race of Cagots, who, whatever the origin of their much discussed name may have been, appear, at all events, to have been descendants of those who were suspected of being sufferers from the introduction of leprosy into Béarn, by the crusaders on their return from the East. The then governors of the country made all possible efforts to isolate those afflicted, or supposed to be afflicted, by this horrible disease. Separate houses, and in the churches separate doors and bénitiers, effected this object in life, while in death they were condemned to lie in special cemeteries. One law restricted their employment to out-of-door trades, such as shepherding, thatching, and cutting wood. It was one of these humble shepherds who, dwelling in a cabin close to St. Christau, used to water his animals at the neighbouring source, and also take it for his own use. He found his malady gradually disappearing, which he attributed to the effects of the sparkling fountain. This he made known to his fellow-sufferers, and its fame spread until Cagots flocked from all parts to profit by it. The particular spring—for there are five in all, frequented by these poor creatures—still retains the name it then acquired of "eau des ladres," or "des dartres."

Owing to the miserable prejudices of the Béarnais, they shunned the resort of the Cagots to their own loss, and it was long before the general public benefitted by these waters, which are now used both for drinking and bathing in cases not only of skin disorders, but also of intermittent fever, rheumatism, asthma, &c. &c.

It would be hard to say whether we found the "grande foire," or the day after the fair, which we spent in the Val d'Aspe, the more enjoyable. The early part of the drive on leaving Oloron, was indeed scarcely so picturesque as that of St. Christau, but it perhaps enhanced the marvellously beautiful scenery into which we emerged on reaching Asaspe. There the Basque country begins, and from this point the views continue increasing, if possible, in picturesqueness and beauty, till Urdos is reached. The mountains, it is true, are less bold and rugged than in other of the Pyrenean gorges, but they are so distributed and thrown about, as to present an infinitely greater variety of tints, while they charm by the very contrast they offer to the better known excursions.

A gradual ascent along a capital road follows the course of the Gave d'Oloron, which is crossed at Escob, after passing the rugged Pêne or Bolt, near which a Latin inscription, cut in the rock, commemorates the making of this road by the Romans under Valerius. Passing through Sarrance we still follow the line of the Gave to Bédous. The colour of the water is a pretty soft brown, like the ground of a cameo, or the liquid shadow of Dante's Lethe, "Bruna, bruna, sotto l'ombra perpetua," quite different from the beautiful beryl tint of the other Gaves of the Pyrenees. While the horses were being changed at Bédous, we breakfasted at the tidy little inn, two Basque farmers making conversation for us the while. They told us of a compatriot, an English clergyman of good family, who has adopted this beautiful country as his own, married a mountain beauty, and, entirely giving up his profession and native land, settled in the half Protestant village of Osse, near Bédous, where he divides his time between cultivating a little "propriété," fishing, and painting the lovely scenery by which he is surrounded. The singular isolated French Protestant community of Osse consists of about thirty families, who have preserved their faith for ages in the midst of their Roman Catholic neighbours. The two churches are equally ancient, and there is no rivalry nor enmity on the part of the majority towards the small Protestant minority; on the contrary, intermarriages are not uncommon nor objected to by the priests, showing how curiously tradition and habit will induce tolerance, as well as the contrary. Some years ago we spent a morning in the village of Osse, lionised by the pasteur, but as it lies somewhat off the main road, and we were anxious to push on

to Urdos, we were unable on this occasion to visit it, or to see the very ancient and curious Roman church at Accous, "Aspa Luca." Here the Pyrenean Burns, Despourrius, was born, and an obelisk is erected to his memory.

Briskly our Bédous horses trotted up the valley, obedient to the howls and shrieks of the energetic "cocher," who never for one minute subsided into silence. Indifferent to his somewhat paralytic whip, the steeds were attentive to his voice, which, when for a moment not required to exhort them, went off into a wild kind of chant, and again, without a moment's pause, relapsed into yells of encouragement.

As we left the Bassin de Bédous, we passed from one magnificent defile to another, and threaded the narrow streets of Aigun and Etsaut—streets so narrow that to pass another vehicle would have been absolutely impossible. The story occurred to our minds in which such a perplexing case is suggested to that most charming of elderly heroines, the "my lady" of Mrs. Gaskell, who, after much consideration, thus solved the problem: "The youngest creation must back." Fortunately, it was not necessary for us to resort to this aristocratic but inconvenient process, nothing of nobler creation than mules appearing to impede our progress.

The roadside walls were hung with lambskins in process of drying, ready for making into gloves. We now approached the last defile, leading to the foot of the fort of Urdos, or Portalet, which commands and bars the entrance to the valley, by the magnificent road made by the great Napoleon, to facilitate the conveyance of timber for ship-building from the neighbouring forests. The fort of Portalet, though in its way unique, reminds one of Gibraltar and Ehrenbreitstein. It is hewn in the natural rock, within the shoulder of an almost perpendicular hill, the façades only and the domed roofs to the innumerable long passages being formed of masonry, which is battlemented and flanked by bartezan turrets. Loopholes and embrasures for cannon are pierced in the face of the fortress. But the exterior gives the spectator no idea of the extent and number of the galleries, stairs, and batteries excavated in its interior. They remind one more of the intricate construction of the architect bee, or some such ingenious insect, than of anything else. More than ten years were occupied in forming this gigantic outpost of France, which is capable of holding three thousand men. A zigzag road conducts, by a succession of stages, to the fort, which is at a height of five hundred feet, overlooking a precipice, which is connected, by a drawbridge spanning the abyss, with the rock on which the fort stands. The destruction of this bridge would, of course, be an easy matter to the garrison, should it be wished to interrupt communication between France and Spain. Only one company of soldiers is stationed at Urdos, and this is changed every six months.

Though the main part of the regiment was quartered at Pau, remarkably little intercourse appeared to be kept up with these exiles in the solitary fort. The officers, we presume, receive newspapers and letters, but the men were in utter ignorance of recent news, not even having heard of the late successes of the English army in Abyssinia. They took a lively interest in Pau news, especially in hearing what music their band, of which they are justly proud, had been playing lately. It has been quite a pleasure to us since our trip to Urdos to forward to these poor billiardless, paperless Frenchmen our local Pyrenean journal. That they appreciate such resources is evident from the extensive use made of a library provided for the garrison by the kindness of the sous-préfet, and for which the monthly subscription amounts to one sou per member. A private soldier who accompanied us in our inspection of the fort was deep in Mrs. Gaskell's novel, Nord et Sud. We were amused at meeting our old friend in French disguise in this out-of-the-way corner of the world. The reader informed us he found it the more interesting because of the recent agitation in France on the subject of strikes.

This airy bracing place must be the best possible change for the soldiers who have suffered from the bad fever, which has of late infested the unhealthy barracks at Pau. It was touching to hear with what gratitude and feeling the men spoke of the devotion and death of a sister of charity at Pau, who had especially taken under her charge sick soldiers, from whom she eventually caught her fatal illness. Sœur Felicité was a lady by birth, but devoted herself and her fortune to the alleviation of those who, like her own dearly loved brother, were in the service of their country.

"She nursed me through the fever, and saved my life," said one man to me; "and ungrateful it seemed for me to be here, breathing this fine air and to be growing

stronger every day, while she was dying of infection and bad air. I was not even present at her funeral, the saint! Ah! but she understands all that now, without doubt!"

Such talk whiled away the time as I sat in the concierge's quarters, while the rest of the party inspected the fort more fully than I was able to do, not feeling inclined to go down by subterranean passages to the bed of the Gave, only to remount before descending the zigzag road to meet our carriage. I amused myself by watching the chivalrous attentions paid by the soldiers to the concierge's niece, the only specimen of the fair sex inhabiting this desolate stronghold. Much inclined, apparently, to give herself airs, the Queen of Urdos must infallibly be spoilt for any other sphere in which her subjects may be fewer, and their devotion more divided.

We reluctantly took leave of Urdos in all its rugged beauty, and descended to the road, where the carriage was awaiting us on its return from the village of Urdos, about a mile distant, where the horses, and doubtless the melodious Jehu also, had been refreshed.

The Marquis de Cherizet's bear cub was caught on a mountain near Urdos. We have heard lately that the poor little fellow has been presented to the Jardin des Plantes at Paris, having proved sulky and intractable at Pau. In the month of June we saw a magnificent bear-skin offered for sale in one of the Pyrenean villages, which turned out to be that of the father of this cub, killed close to Urdos, as he, poor beast, was prowling about, regardless of his own safety, in search of his wounded wife with her little one.

We returned at a great pace to Bédous, where we again picked up our own horses. We had, in the morning, overtaken Spaniards leading, driving, or riding home their newly bought mules; and we now met strings of the handsome sleek skittish brutes going to Spain with their bizarre and dirty-looking owners. Pretty as the groups were, the eye almost wearied of the endless and confused procession of frisky beasts, especially as they seriously retarded our return by their pranks and meanderings; acquaintance with their new masters being so recent as to make numbers of them, loose as they were, more than half inclined to turn round, and follow our carriage back to Oloron. We returned late to a solitary dinner, and were glad to go to bed after our long day in the mountains.

Before leaving the following day, the third of the fair and the principal day for pleasure purposes, we took a stroll in the Place of the Basse Ville, among the booths, gambling-tables, ménageries, &c., which were thronged by peasants and townsfolk. I gambled at the china and glass rotatory table, and won once out of three times, but instead of gaining the imposing candlestick which had been offered to bribe me, I was put off with a lop-sided salt-cellar. This I presented to a juvenile bystander, who seemed quite overwhelmed with the magnitude of the gift.

We recognised some old Cauterets faces in the crowd, among others that of a fur dealer who for three weeks persisted in trying to cheat us into buying black fox-skins with artificial brushes. Here we were fortunate in finding and buying a fine specimen with a good brush, and its own!

We bought two trifling photographs of Oloron, but could get none of beautiful Urdos, which would be so good a subject for photography. That Oloron and Urdos, which are within such easy reach of Pau, should be but little known by our erratic country people, is singular. That it is so, is proved by the fact that at none of the numerous photograph shops at Pau could I get a single view, taken in or near the Val d'Aspe. An Oloron tradesman, who combines a little photographing with his many other vocations, and who migrates in the summer to Cauterets, promised to take for me some views of the valley and fort. For the nonce I was obliged to content myself with buying some trifling fairings as souvenirs of a previous pleasant visit to Oloron. Certainly, it was necessary to get up a little romance to enhance the value of these bagatelles, for the intrinsic worth of the wicker fish (whose interior is intended, I cannot say calculated, to contain knitting-needles, to be inserted at the nostrils) and of the grim specimen of jewellery I chose, scarcely recommends them as the vrais bijoux, the loquacious vender represented them to be!

PLOGARRIAN.

IN SEVEN CHAPTERS. CHAPTER VI.

With the exception, perhaps, of the coast of Norway, there is not so wild, so dreary, so savage a seaboard in Europe as that of the coast of Brittany. Generally the ocean seems to put off some at least of the terrors of its grandeur, its might, and its loneliness when it comes to meet the

land. On the iron-bound shores of Finisterre and the Côtes du Nord it is not so. There it seems, as if the ocean had impressed all its character on the land, instead of receiving any modification from it.

And the parish of Tregastel, to which Delaroche had been sent, is situated on the wildest part of this wild coast. The population, among whom he was summoned to labour, seemed to bear, in every part of their character, the same impress as that which marked the inanimate world around them. They are a sombre people, as the sky above them is sombre. They are marked by that species of wild melancholy, which seems to be the characteristic of the lonely promontories and sea-worn bays they inhabit. Though a moral race, as regards many of the matters with which the immorality of other peoples is concerned, they are not, or were not, an easy people for their spiritual pastors to deal with. The nature of the coast is one terribly fatal to ships, and the Bretons of the coast are, or were, inveterate wreckers. And the practice very naturally leads, as it is easy to understand, to lawlessness of all sorts, and often to crimes of the darkest character. Then, again, strange as it may seem to the reader of the present age in England, at the date of the events here narrated—in the early part of the present century, that is to say—Christianity had by no means altogether yet succeeded in substituting itself for the old Druidical paganism! And this, also, it may readily be believed, did not tend to facilitate the task of a Christian priest.

Nevertheless, the Bretons are a very religious people. They are not like the inhabitants of some more smiling lands, disposed to live in, and for, the visible, to the neglect of the invisible. The sombre and severe scenery around them, which has fashioned their characters in its own similitude, has made it impossible that this should be the case. For the inhabitant of the Breton coast there are voices in every wailing wind that sweeps his rocky shore; there are the outlines of forms in the mists that so frequently environ him; there are tokens in the drifting clouds; and warnings of sinister import in the dull roar of the waves, which are for ever scooping the echoing caverns, or carving the rocks into fantastic shapes and grim likenesses. Whether Pagan or Christian, the mind of the Breton is saturated with superstitions, and they are all of a gloomy kind.

It so happened, as if to make the initiation of the young curé into his new duties on this wild coast, and amid these wild people, yet more dreary and weird in all its accompaniments than it might otherwise have been, that he arrived in his parish in the winter. He arrived in the winter, and it is difficult to make a reader, who has never visited that coast, realise the exceeding desolation of the spot that was assigned to him as a habitation, even in summer.

Far protruding into the sea stretches a long, narrow promontory, which gives more or less of shelter to a small, scattered village of fishermen's huts, situated on the shore at the promontory's base. But the land, as is very frequently the case, rises rapidly from this base, and rises even more and more till the furthermost point of the promontory is reached. The village is the village of Tregastel; but the church, which so poor a collection of dwellings could hardly claim to have in its immediate vicinity, rather than at any other spot in the wide-spread parish, is built—in accordance with the long, lingering feeling, which once prompted men to worship on high places—on the high ground at the end of the promontory. And, as according to old, and, probably, still orthodox ideas, the priest's daily business lay more with the church than with the congregation, the habitation provided for him stood away from all the other dwellings of the little village, by the side of the church.

It was a very humble little dwelling, sturdily built and strong, however, with very thick walls; for stone, if nothing else, is abundant in Tregastel. And it was roofed with huge slabs of the same material, the extreme massiveness of which had served to save the labour of splitting them, and still served to secure the little homestead from being unroofed by the terrible blasts that often sweep all that coast, and especially the exposed headlands of it. Some little shelter was obtained in one direction from a huge, naked rock, which formed the culminating point of the promontory, and lay there, on the highest point of another naked block of granite, which thrust out its bald head above the thin soil. The shelter thus obtained might have seemed to a man of nervous temperament less desirable than unmitigated exposure to the wind. For the huge mass, weighing many hundred tons, was a rocking stone, of which there are several among the colossal masses which have been tossed in weird confusion upon this coast, as if they were the monstrous fragments of an antediluvian world; and

in certain gales, when the hurricane was strong enough, and chanced to blow with all its force exactly on the right spot, the huge, dumb monster, with the weight of ages on its head, might be seen to nod visibly. But it had continued to nod for more hundreds of years than man's records could tell, and had never fallen yet; so that the little parsonage had every right to consider the rocking stone among the friendly forces of nature rather than among those with which it and its inhabitants had to contend.

And these were many in that wild winter time. The parish was, though small in the number of souls which made up its population, yet large in its territorial extent. And the summons that calls the priest to the bedside of a perhaps dying parishioner is one that brooks not either neglect or delay. For may not the eternal weal or woe of a human soul be hanging in the balance?

To do them justice, very few soldiers of Rome's black army are ever slack to obey those calls to arms. And assuredly the Reverend Jean Delaroche was not likely to be one of these, let the call come when and where it might.

It was about mid-winter, when he had been in his cure only two or three months, that a summons of this kind reached him under circumstances that might have made many a man not so alert to obey it as he might otherwise have been.

The day had been rainy, but without wind. But as the sun went down, a wind began to blow from the north-west, which soon sent the great billows tumbling in upon the coast, in masses that broke upon the distant rocks with a dull sound like the report of cannon. It is the north-west wind that blows, when Ocean is in the mind to throw a prize or two upon the coast for the benefit of his Breton children; and, doubtless, on many a headland there were eyes looking out into the storm, that night, to watch for any such blessing that Heaven might please to send. Well, if there were no contrivances in action; such, for example, as a cow, with her head tied down to her knee, and a lantern fixed to her horn, so that, when she should be driven along the shore, the movement of the light might resemble that of a ship's lantern fixed to a mast, and induce unhappy mariners to imagine that a vessel was there safely ploughing the waves, and that the deadly shore must yet be far off, and so might entice them to their destruction on the rocky coast. Well, if no such aids to the beneficent purposes of Heaven were resorted to!

It was about an hour before midnight, that Delaroche was awakened by a knocking against the window-pane of the room in which he slept, and voices outside the window.

On rising from his sleep, and going to the window, he was accosted by a young man, who asked if he were Monsieur le Curé, "because," continued the voice, "if so, your reverence must come, if you please, to le Père Morvenec, who is dying."

"Le Père Morvenec! Where does he live?" asked the curé, to whom the name was unknown, and who had not yet been long enough in his parish to have made acquaintance with such of his more distant parishioners as were not church-goers.

"At Tresneven, on the other side of the bay," replied the first speaker.

"At Tresneven!" exclaimed Delaroche; "why it is three hours' journey at the least! How am I to get there at this time of night? I will dress myself directly. Come round to the door that I may let you in out of the storm."

Hurrying to the door the curé admitted two men, evidently fishermen—him who had spoken, and an older man, apparently under the authority of the younger.

"How am I to make such a journey as that?" said the curé, again shutting the door, not without an effort of strength against the driving wind and rain.

"We must cross the bay," said the young fisherman. "Tresneven is a good three hours or more from here to go round by land; but we may cross the bay in half an hour, if we have luck."

"Did you come that way?"

"Yes; our boat is under the lee of the rock yonder beneath the moving stone."

"It is not a nice night for the job, is it?" said the curé, who was all the time dressing himself as hastily as he could.

"No, your reverence; it is not a pretty night to cross to Tresneven in; nor a pretty night to die in. And le Père Morvenec won't last till morning."

"Now, I am ready!" said the curé, finishing his toilet by throwing a large black serge cloak around him; "I must call my servant to shut the door behind us, if she can manage to do it."

It took some minutes to wake the old woman, who was the curé's sole domestic and fellow-inhabitant of his lonely parsonage, and make her understand the errand on which he was bound.

"Le Père Morvenec!" grumbled the old woman. "Oh, his time is come, is it? So that's what all the hubbub is about, then? It is a tough job your reverence will have of it, I can tell ye."

Delaroche supposed that the "hubbub" alluded to the waking up of himself and his old servant; and that the "tough job" was the crossing of the bay in the stormy night. Had he been a resident of longer standing on the Breton coast he might have understood that the "hubbub" alluded to was the storm, which the old Breton woman imagined to be caused by the passing of a soul, which if all tales were true, was called away to a specially heavy reckoning; and that the "tough job" was the struggle that he (the curé) was to engage in with the Evil One.

"Good-night, Mère Corven," he said, turning from the door, and crossing himself with a short muttered prayer as he proceeded to follow his conductors to their boat.

"Are you the son of Monsieur Morvenec?" he asked of the younger man, who had hitherto been the sole speaker.

"No, your reverence. Le Père Morvenec has no son, or I should not be here to-night on such an errand as this. It is not a pleasant one, ma foi. But it was a job that a Christian man could not refuse."

"It is a nasty night to be out, certainly."

"Oh pour ça! It isn't that I mind a cupful of rain. I have crossed the bay in worse weather than this. But I had rather have one of your reverence's cloth with me in the boat to-night, than any two of the best seamen in Brest. Allez!"

"You think that God's servant brings a blessing with him, my friend?" said the curé.

"No doubt, your reverence," returned the young fisherman, reverently lifting his broad-brimmed round-crowned hat, while the wind blew across his face the long and abundant hair that fell upon his shoulders —"no doubt, your reverence! But to-night there are evil things about, that you can better battle with than we poor laymen. I saw the Tregastel stone nod three times to the menhir* on Arvan Head as I came up from the boat. And the voices of the spirits were calling, and shrieking, and wailing, and laughing in the caves of Guirec, as we passed Guirec rocks, enough to make the sweat run off you, saving your reverence's presence. They were calling to the poor soul of old Père Morvenec. But, please God, your reverence will baulk 'em yet if we can get to him in time; but he won't last till morning, that's very sure! I never heard the voices in Guirec caves howling that way that it did not betoken death near!"

They were in the boat by this time, and Delaroche inquired of his conductors if he could be of any use in lending a hand. The young man asked him if he could hold hard the rope attached to the corner of the sail, after it had been passed round a belaying-pin. It would add very much to their safety, he said, if that could be so held, ready to be let go at a word, instead of being fastened to the side of the boat.

And thus they went dashing on through the black waves. Nothing but practised skill and perfect knowledge of the locality, joined to unhesitating intrepidity, could have navigated the boat safely in such a sea, and amid the rocks of such a coast. From the bottom of the bay came out a long point of dangerous low-lying rocks, partially dividing the bay into two portions. These were the dreaded Guirec rocks. And there, as the boat passed them, not without difficulty, the "voices" in the caves hollowed out of them were heard rising above the roar of the wind, and amid the ceaseless exertion and activity required for the navigation of the boat, both the fishermen contrived to kneel for a minute, while they crossed themselves, and muttered a hasty prayer.

The boat reached Tresneven in safety in less than an hour after they had left Tregastel Point, and the curé was conducted forthwith to a house, which was evidently by far the best in the place, and at once taken by a middle-aged woman, whom the young man addressed as Madame Morvenec, and who asked the curé if he would refresh himself with a mouthful of brandy before going to his duty, to the bedside of his dying parishioner.

Delaroche needed not the voices in the caves of Guirec, nor the mystic nodding of the Tregastel stone to its old neighbour the menhir upon Arvan Head, to convince him that the man before him was really dying. He was very much older than the wife with

* The tall, upright stones found in many parts of Brittany are so called. They were objects of Druidical worship; and the superstitious reverence, still paid to them by the people, is one of the still lingering remnants of the old religion. The clergy in many cases, finding it impossible to prevent the people from paying reverence to these stones, have placed crosses on the top of them, in order, as it were, to filch for the profit of a more holy faith, the worship intended for a very different divinity.

whom Delaroche had just spoken, and it was plain that his hour had come. Very plain, too, shortly it became that le Père Morvenec's soul was fully as ill at ease as his body, and that his shrift would not be a short or a light one.

Of what passed between the dying man and his confessor nothing would of course have ever been known, had it not been that the first thing which the latter enjoined on his penitent for his soul's weal, when he had heard his confession, was that an open avowal should be made to the same effect, made indeed to him the priest, but made not "in confession." To recount the story, therefore, accurately, in the exact order in which the facts became known to those who preserved the memory of them in the record from which this narrative is taken, it should be said, that the confession was made; and that the priest then, not without considerable difficulty, induced his penitent—who, despite the ominous voices did not die that night, nor till late the following night—to request him, the curé, to put down in writing the substance of what he had confessed, as regarded one special transaction, which written document he signed in the presence of his wife, and of the young man who had brought the priest across the bay.

Having explained this, however, the substance of Père Morvenec's confession may be told, just as if it had been overheard by the writer.

There was one matter only respecting which the old man's conscience was troubled. He admitted, in reply to the priest's questioning, that he had no doubt been guilty of many a small matter, not quite according to either law or gospel, in the course of many and many a winter night's work on the coast, when the wind was inshore and the harvest of the coast was to be had for the gathering. But the curé failed to enable him to see or feel, that there was any need of great repentance for doing in such matters what everybody else did. Besides, all such matters had been confessed as they had occurred in regular course, and he had never known a Breton priest who thought much harm of them. But there was one thing that did lie heavy on his heart, and which, till the present moment, he had never confessed, though it had happened from twenty to five-and-twenty years ago.

He had been tempted by a man, a gentleman, a seigneur, one whom he had known very well, and in whose company he had often been engaged in some of those not exactly legal matters of which his reverence seemed to make so much. He was a gentleman, though, for all that, and noble into the bargain, and the possessor of a fine estate —the possessor of a fine estate by means of the assistance and the crime of him, Daniel Morvenec!

This was what had happened, and what he had done. The man who had tempted him — the seigneur — had had an elder brother, who had died, leaving one child, a boy, who, of course, if he had lived, ought to have inherited the estate. But Monsieur Gregoire had come to him, and had proposed that the infant, a child between one and two years of age, should be delivered to him, and that he, Morvenec (and at this point of his confession the old man wiped the big drops of perspiration from his brow), should take care that the boy was never heard of more. "But I have no blood — not that boy's blood — upon my soul! I am not his murderer! though the look of him has haunted me from that day to this. Why does he come looking at me out of the dark, on nights like this? I did not kill him. If he died, it was by God's hand—by the waves of the sea; and it is God's hand that makes them swell and flow—God's hand, your reverence, is it not?"

"And your part in the deed? What was that? What did you do with the child?" asked the priest.

"I received him from the hands of a woman in a back street in Rennes, whither I had gone for that purpose, and I brought him hither, and I carried him down to Guirec, and hid him in the caves till nightfall; and then I took him in a boat out to the rock called the Chien, and I left him there. I did not raise my hand against him," whined the old man again, in deprecation of the horror which he thought that his confession had caused in the priest, for the latter had started from the chair, in which he had been sitting by the bedside, at the mention of the Chien rock, and was pacing up and down the little chamber with disordered steps.

"I did not raise a finger against the child. I did not hurt him, Monsieur le Curé," whimpered the wretched old man again.

"Daniel Morvenec!" said the priest, solemnly mastering his agitation, and returning to his seat by the side of the bed —"Daniel Morvenec, is the Chien rock covered at high water?"

"In rough weather and at high tides it

is covered, Monsieur le Curé," said the shivering sinner.

"And was it such weather, or such a state of the tide, on the night when you carried the child thither, and left him on the rock?" asked the priest again.

"The night was such another night as this! May God be merciful to my soul!" groaned the dying man.

"The rock, then, would of a surety be covered and swept by the waves?" again demanded the priest.

"Not for three hours after I left the child there—not for three hours at least," urged the old man, eagerly. "You see, Monsieur le Curé, it was not I who took the life of the child; it was the hand of God!"

The priest heaved a deep sigh, and remained silent a few minutes; while the dying man lay trembling all over, and his teeth audibly striking each other, while the roar of the wind, and the beating of the sea on the rocks close at hand, made a wailing and dismal music, which seemed to the passing sinner like accusing voices from out of the long past, and to the priest like dim, returning memories of a consciousness long since overlaid by the events of later years.

"Are you able to tell the year and the day of the year on which you left the child on the Chien rock?" the latter said at length.

"The day is too well fixed in my heart for me ever to forget it, Monsieur le Curé," the old man replied. "It was on the 9th of September, now a day or two more than twenty-three years and five months ago."

Again there was a pause of silence in the chamber. The priest stepped across the floor of the little room to a prie-dieu underneath a crucifix on the opposite wall, no uncommon article of furniture in the bedroom of a Breton peasant, and there, with clasped hands and bowed head, he remained in earnest prayer—or thanksgiving, perhaps—for some minutes. He, too, had that same date well fixed in his mind. For good Captain Morel, before leaving him at Rouen, had thought it right then to let him know all that he, the captain, knew about the manner in which he had fallen into his hands. He gave him a carefully drawn statement, which had been prepared at the time, setting forth how, on the 9th of September, in that same year to which Morvenec referred, the Belle Louise, outward bound, had been driven out of her course; and how his boat's crew, having been sent on shore, on the coast of the Côtes du Nord, for fresh vegetables, had, in pulling off, by God's mercy seen a child upon the rock of the Chien, where, in an another hour the sea would be raging, and had brought off the child to his ship. At length, rising from his knees, the priest turned and stood at the foot of the sick man's bed, and said slowly and with solemn voice:

"Daniel Morvenec, God has been very merciful to you. It is vain to strive to deceive your own heart, still worse, to seek to deceive Him by the pretence that your hand was not lifted against the child. In thought and intention you were a murderer!"

Morvenec groaned heavily, and visibly trembled from head to foot as he lay in the bed.

"But God, in His infinite mercy," continued the priest, "has saved you from the consummation of the crime you purposed. If you are truly repentant of the intention to do that wicked deed, God grants that you may die without the weight of murder on your soul. For the child, whom you left to the mercy of the waves on the Chien rock, still lives. He still lives to forgive you in his own person for the deed, as fully as I, if you truly repent and make such restitution as is yet in your power, pronounce to you the forgiveness of God."

It is needless to describe the difficulty the curé had, in bringing the mind of the dying man to comprehend and believe the statement of the circumstances as they had really occurred, and still more so to follow the good priest through his efforts to make his penitent understand the meaning and the spiritual value of restitution, and to show him that the restitution which it was still in his power to make, consisted of such a full and duly attested confession (not made under the seal of the sacrament of the confessional) as would avail to cause tardy right and justice to be done.

It is sufficient for the purpose of this narrative to state that such a witnessed confession was made and signed, and that Daniel Morvenec died in the course of the following night.

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THE ROSE AND THE KEY.

CHAPTER XLII. THE SKY CLEARING.

LADY VERNON passed from the great drawing-room, smiling; but as she traversed the two rooms that lie between it and the hall, the light rapidly faded from her features, and her face grew dark. Across the hall she went, and entered first one lonely room, then another, until she found herself, at last, in the shield-room.

In deep abstraction, she walked slowly about this room, gazing, one after the other, at the armorial bearings, with their quarterings, "gules" and "or," of the Rose and the Key. Looking on her face, you would have thought that she was reading malignant oracles on the wall. She did not see these things. The eyes of her spirit were opened, and she saw, in the abstraction of horror, far beyond them, the pictures of a tragedy.

Then she stood still at the window, looking out upon a cloistered square, hedged round with yew. Dark yew-trees, trimmed into odd shapes, stand in files along the sward, and many arches are cut in the quadrangle of yew hedge that forms the inner and narrower square, and white statues gleam faintly in the shadow.

Neither did she see this funereal cloister, rising as it recedes, and backed by the solemn foliage of masses of Roydon timber.

She sighed heavily again and again at long intervals. She was restless, and looked round the room, and then left it, going through a corridor, and passing up a narrower staircase, to her own room.

It was her custom to read in her morning room every day, for only five minutes, or fifteen, or sometimes for nearly an hour, between one and two.

Latimer, her dark, silent, active maid, by no means young, was in attendance, as was her wont, in the dressing-room, from which opens Lady Vernon's smaller morning room.

Into this the lady passed; Latimer, stiff and angular, following her to the door, with soft tread, and there awaiting orders.

"Are you quite well, please, my lady?" she asked, with the privilege of an old servant, looking a little hard at her mistress.

"Quite, thanks—that is, very well—yes, I'm very well. I think, Latimer, I shan't want you," she said, seating herself at the table, and placing her hands on the large, noted Bible that lies there, and sighing again heavily.

She opened it, she turned over the leaves slowly; they lay open at the Gospel of St. John.

Latimer, with a tread soft as a cat's, withdrew.

"Have I lost the power to collect my ideas?" said Lady Vernon. "I'm excited. If my heart did not beat quite so fast! Ah, yes, I know how that must end."

She got up and walked restlessly to the rows of prettily bound books, and stood as if reading their backs for a time, and passed on in abstraction. The first thing that recalled her was the sight of her face in the porcelain-framed mirror.

"Yes, I do look a little ill," she said, as she saw the hectic fire in her cheeks. "My God! that such a thing should have befallen!" she almost cried suddenly, lifting her hand to her temple. "I have lost him—I have lost him—I have lost him! What has gone right with me? Oh, God! why am I pursued and tortured?"

She began to tremble like a person pierced with cold, and this trembling be-

came more violent. It was a continued shudder. After a time it subsided. She felt faint and ill. But her agitation had, in a measure, quieted.

She knelt, but she could not "lift up her heart," or fix her mind.

She sat down again, and looked on the open Bible. Her eye rested on the text:

"Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come."

It glared on her from the page, like the sudden reality of her smouldering despair.

"Yes, God has hidden his face for ever from me. I seek him, and cannot find him, and where he is, thither I cannot come," she muttered, with clasped hands, and eyes raised. She sat for a time silently in a dull misery.

An idea had taken possession of her. It did not make her love Maud better. It was that she had heard, or guessed at, the suspicions which were conveyed in the rumour that officious Mr. Tintern had mentioned — the rumour that she, Lady Vernon, liked Captain Vivian—and this demonstration of Maud's, she thought, whether she cared or not about him, was meant to take him away from her. She would not yet be quite sure that Maud liked him. She had watched that closely. What insane malice that girl must have!

But a woman of her strong will, pride, and ability, could not be very long incapacitated, and in a little time she had resolved upon several things.

She shut the big Bible, that still lay open, with an angry clap.

"I have asked for help, and it has been denied me," she said, sourly and fiercely to herself, with an odd mixture of faith and profanation. "I shall see what I can do without it."

The first thing she resolved was to send instantly for Mr. Dawe. Once she decided upon a measure, she did not waste time over its execution.

She glanced at her image in the glass. She was looking a little more like herself. She felt better. Her confidence was returning.

Not a human being should trace in her features, manner, conversation, the least evidence of her sufferings and her resolution. She would meet them more easily and cheerfully than ever.

She paused at the door, till she had decided what would be the most rapid and potent mode of invoking Mr. Dawe. She stood in deep thought for a minute, with stern lips and brows knit, and her dark eyes wandering—the image of a beautiful Thracian witch.

This point at last determined, she opened the door quickly, and Mr. Dawe himself stood before her in the lobby. Mr. Dawe, in his black-caped coat, shiny leather leggings, and black wig, his low-crowned hat in his left hand. His right arm was extended, for he was on the point of knocking, if he had not been arrested by the unexpected opening of the door.

The figure stood with arm extended and knuckle bent, and its dark furrowed features lighted by the fixed eyeballs that were staring at her.

Very unusually for him, he was first to speak.

"Latimer said you were here. I was going to knock. You are pretty well?"

"Very well, thanks; I'm so glad to see you. You remember this room?"

He followed her in, and shut the door.

"Perfectly," he answered, rolling his eyes round the room.

"Sit down. The gong will soon sound for luncheon. Let us talk a little first, and tell me—it seems an inhospitable way of putting it, but it is so difficult to move you in the direction of Roydon — what has brought you here? Nothing that is not pleasant, I hope?"

She looked in his face.

"Something—I am not at liberty to tell what—that may affect Captain Vivian very seriously."

"Nothing in his profession?" said the lady, in alarm.

"Nothing," says Mr. Dawe.

"Surely you can tell me what it is?" she urged.

"Certainly I cannot," he answered.

"Is it money?"

"I shall answer nothing at present. You ask in vain."

"Surely you will say yes or no to that?"

"To nothing. No. If that guess were not right you would go on to another, and so my refusing at last to answer would imply that you were right."

"Well, I shall learn by-and-bye whether you won't yield a little."

"You shall," he answered.

"You mean you won't. Tell me, then, generally, what you are going to do," said the lady.

"To remain here two or three days with Captain Vivian," he answered.

"No," she said. "You have come to take him away."

"H'm!" replied Mr. Dawe; and his prominent eyes stared in her dark ones. "How soon?"

"This afternoon," she answered, decisively.

"That's untoward," he said, lowering his hand, and looking down.

"Why untoward?" she persisted.

"I can't tell you yet."

"It may be; if it be I'm sorry; but it is inevitable. He must go this afternoon."

As she thus spoke, the old gentleman's eyes fixed on her with a look of inquiry, and were then lowered again; and he nodded once or twice slightly, as if affirmatively to some thought of his own.

"He can return—he shall return," she said, softly, laying her pretty hand on the old man's arm.

"In the mean time, you begin to feel that you were precipitate?" he said, dryly.

"No," she answered, passionately. "He shall return in a few days. I will lose my life rather than lose him. I will write, and he shall come again."

"How soon?"

"Ten days—a fortnight perhaps; perhaps in a week. But at present he must go."

"So be it," he said. "I wanted to tell you that they have extended his leave four weeks."

"I thank Heaven," she said, gently and fervently. "I thought they would. I thought I knew how to accomplish that."

"I came to your door here to tell you. It is near your luncheon hour. Yes; eight minutes to two. Vivian will be at luncheon. I don't lunch, but I don't mind going in. I must not let him slip through my fingers."

"You're not offended with me?" she pleaded.

"Who? I? I never was offended in my life," said the dark little gentleman, in perfect good faith.

"It seems so unaccountable and unkind," she continued; "but I can't help it, and I can't explain yet, any more than you can; at least you won't ask me."

"No, certainly," he interposed.

"And you have been very kind in this matter," she added.

"Respecting Captain Vivian?"

"Yes, very kind," she repeated.

"No, not kind—savage. But I have done what, all things well considered, I thought wisest. That is all," he said, and took the pinch of snuff he held in his fingers.

"Well, I am grateful. I thank you from my heart, and I am going to beg another favour," she went on. "You will not tell him that it is I who wish him to leave Roydon at present, but give him some other reason."

"I'll give him no reason," said Mr. Dawe.

"Will you take it on yourself?"

"Certainly."

"You have not seen him since you came?" she asked.

"No."

"So much the better; and you must come as well as he: you promise?"

"Yes, I must come, and the sooner the better, for him at least."

"You will find them now at luncheon. I'll follow you when I have put up my books."

She did not care to enter the room at the same moment with Mr. Dawe, or that people should suppose that they had been conferring.

CHAPTER XLIII. ANTOMARCHI.

Doctor Malkin was the only guest present, except Mr. Dawe, for, by this time, we have come to regard Captain Vivian almost as one of the family.

Maud, looking quite lovely, but professing to be very much fatigued by her exertions at the Wymering ball, was chatting gaily with Miss Max and Captain Vivian as Lady Vernon came in.

That handsome lady was the only one of the party whom fatigue, to judge by her looks, had touched. Quite at her ease she seemed, and joined very gaily in the general talk.

Doctor Malkin at first was too busy to contribute much to the conversation, but he soon became less absorbed.

"I saw you, Doctor Malkin, at the ball last night," said Maud; "but I don't think you danced?"

"No, certainly," said Doctor Malkin.

"Well, I think you were right," put in Miss Max, who did not like him. "Would not a dance of doctors be rather like a dance of death?"

"Awfully grisly," acquiesced the doctor, with a laugh. "No, I don't go to frighten the people; I attend merely as a spectator, to evidence my loyalty. You know, it is a very loyal celebration; and, besides, one meets one's friends; and then there is supper; and, after all, a nobody who doesn't dance may slip away whenever he pleases, and no one misses him."

"Yes, except his friends," said Miss

Vernon; "and I'm so glad you mentioned them, because I wanted so much to ask you about one in particular, whose appearance I thought very striking. You told me you remarked him also, Captain Vivian?"

"I know, yes; the man with the dark face, and very odd eyes, and black beard, cut as square as a book," said the fair-haired captain. "If he had not been so very odd-looking, I should have thought him almost handsome."

"I thought him quite handsome," said Maud; "he had such a strange, energetic, commanding countenance. I felt that I could not quite decide whether he looked like a great man, or only a great charlatan, but still there was something so striking about him, and so interesting, that it was hard to take one's eyes off him while he was in sight."

"I was trying to remember, last night after we came home," said Maximilla Medwyn, "where I had met him before, for I know I did meet him somewhere, and now I recollect perfectly, it was at Lady Mardykes', whose house is, I think, one of the most charming and wonderful places in the world. She has every one that is worth seeing or knowing, I do believe, in the habitable world, and she is such good company herself, and so clever, and I have been trying to remember his name."

"Would you remember it if you heard it?" asked the doctor, who had once or twice essayed to put in a word, with a smile.

"I'm certain I should—I think I should," answered Miss Max.

"Was it Antomarchi?"

"The very thing, said Miss Max, much relieved. "The same name, I think, as the physician's at St. Helena—Napoleon's, I mean. Then he is the very person I remember meeting at Lady Mardykes'. What is he?"

"A physician; a very accomplished one," said Doctor Malkin. "He has written some of the ablest papers extant in our medical journals."

"Is he any relation of Napoleon's physician?" asked Miss Vernon.

"Very distant, if any," answered the doctor.

"Have not we talked enough about doctors?" said Lady Vernon, a little impatiently.

"Only one word more," pleaded Miss Max. "I do assure you, Barbara, if you had seen him you would have been just as curious as I."

"I don't know a great deal about him," said Doctor Malkin, suddenly cooling upon the subject, in which, up to then, he had appeared very well up.

"Where does he practise?" asked Miss Max.

"He tried London, where his writings had made him a reputation, but it did not do," Doctor Malkin answered, smiling a little uncomfortably, as if some awkward recollections were disturbing him, and the obliquity of his dark, close-set eyes looked, as whenever he was put out, a little more marked and sinister. "I can't say he practises anywhere as a physician. He is consulted, and he writes. The profession have a very high opinion of him. I don't know him, that is, I can't say I am more than a—a—just a tolerated acquaintance and an admirer."

"Where does he live?" asked Miss Max.

"Oh—a—it is very stupid, but I really totally forget the name of the place," said Doctor Malkin.

"How far away?" persisted Miss Medwyn.

"How far away? I am the worst guesser of a distance in the world," says the doctor, looking up to the cornice, as if in search of an inspiration.

"You must let me ask a question, Max, if you think for the present we have talked enough about this Mr.—whatever his name is. I want to trouble Doctor Malkin with an inquiry," said Lady Vernon, who seemed to grow more and more uncomfortable under the inscrutable stare of eccentric Mr. Dawe's prominent brown eyes from the other side of the table. He seemed suddenly to become conscious that he had been treating the handsome face of that great lady a little too like a picture, and he rolled his eyeballs in another direction. Lady Vernon continued, "And how did you find poor old Grimston to-day?"

"She's a shade better, but you know she is a very old woman. I suppose she was here sixty years ago?"

"I dare say; more, perhaps," said Lady Vernon. "You know poor Rebecca Grimston?" she asked Maximilla, who acknowledged the acquaintance. "Well, poor thing, she had a fainting fit, about ten o'clock to-day. She had one about three months ago, and recovered so slowly that this alarmed me a good deal."

"Dear me! I had not an idea. I must have seemed so unfeeling, delaying you so long about Doctor Antomarchi. But I am so glad to hear she is better."

Lady Vernon had ever so many questions still to put to Doctor Malkin, and the doctor seemed to take a very special interest in old Mrs. Grimston's case, and grew more and more animated and confidential.

Miss Max was now talking to Mr. Dawe, and now and then a little to Maud, and to Captain Vivian.

"I saw an old flame of yours at the ball last night," said Miss Max. "I'm sure you know who I mean."

"I don't," said Mr. Dawe, conclusively.

"You have had so many, I dare say. But this one you will remember when I tell you. It was Diana Rowley."

"Diana Rowley," repeated Mr. Dawe. "Is Miss Rowley still living?"

"What a gallant question! Do you know she made precisely the same inquiry, in the same tone of wonder, when I mentioned you. Lovers dissemble their feelings so."

"She must have been eight or nine-and-twenty then."

"When?" interposed Miss Max.

"In the year 'thirty-four; June. Let me see, she must be sixty-three or sixty-four now; this is the twenty-eighth of August."

"She was slight, very good figure, and fine eyes," said Miss Max.

"Yes, she was comely," assented Mr. Dawe, reflectively.

"You used to say she was a little too thin," said Miss Max, "but she has improved. She is the fattest woman in the county now."

"Really!" exclaimed Mr. Dawe.

"Yes, and she has given up the only thing you used to complain of—she has given up riding to the hounds."

"H'm!" said Mr. Dawe.

"Well; then she is still approachable," continued Miss Max, cheerily. "She might have been married, I'm told, twice; but—I don't know who she has been waiting for."

"She must have known very well that Richard Dawe was not a marrying man. Tut, tut, Maximilla; you were always fond of quizzing people," said the old bachelor.

"You'd have done very well to marry her, though," said Maximilla.

"I don't see any good it would have done me."

"An infinity. She'd have given you a good shaking," said Maximilla, as they got up.

Miss Medwyn and Maud went together into the drawing-room, and then out among the flowers. Mr. Dawe signed to Captain Vivian, as he was leaving the luncheon-room to follow the ladies, and he turned. Mr. Dawe led him to a window, where they had a quiet and earnest talk.

As Maud and Maximilla stood among the flowers, doubtful whether they would take a walk into the woods, or visit the conservatory first, Miss Max, who was looking in that direction, said suddenly:

"Oh, look there! Who can that be?"

Maud looked round, and saw a hired carriage, with luggage on the top, driving down the avenue.

"It can't be Mr. Dawe, for he told me, when he arrived, that he intended staying two or three days, and that Captain Vivian's leave was extended."

The ladies stood side by side looking after the carriage, until it was lost to sight.

"I should not be a bit surprised," said Miss Max, "if Barbara had ordered Captain Vivian to make a march to head-quarters. Come in, and let us find out what it is."

There was no one in the hall as they passed. But in the drawing-room they found Lady Vernon.

"Who has gone away, Barbara?" inquired Miss Max.

Lady Vernon looked up, so as to see Maud's face as well as Maximilla's.

"One of Mr. Dawe's imperious whims. He has gone, and taken away Captain Vivian with him."

Maud felt that Lady Vernon's all-seeing eyes rested upon her for a moment as she said this, and her colour changed.

Lady Vernon did not seem to observe her embarrassment.

"Very sudden," said Max.

"And mysterious," added Lady Vernon. "He came with the intention of remaining a few days, but he had a long talk with Captain Vivian, and the end of it was a total change of plans, and they came in here and took leave. It was all so sudden. I dare say Mr. Dawe will write to say something more. In the mean time we must only command our curiosity."

She laughed carelessly.

"But aren't they coming back?" asked Miss Max.

"They have not obliged me with any information. I don't know, either, that I could have them very soon, because I shall be going for some weeks to town, and Maud, I suppose, will be going to Lady Mardykes'. I don't think, Maximilla, you care about drawings like these" (there was an open portfolio before her), "ecclesiastical architecture and decoration?"

"No, not the least," she answered; "but I suppose you are busy just now."

"I'm obliged to look at these to say what I think of them. I should rather have left it to the committee, but as I have subscribed a good deal, they choose that I should tell them what I think."

"Then we may as well take our little walk to the woods, Maud."

And away they went.

But Miss Max, instead of going out, stopped in the hall, and said, all radiant with satisfaction, to Maud:

"Well, that is settled very quietly, and I am glad of it. You *are* to go to Lady Mardykes'. I was afraid to say a word, Barbara is so odd and suspicious, sometimes, and if she saw how pleased I was, it might have put it into her head to recal her permission. I'll write to Lady Mardykes this moment to tell her she may ask you, with every confidence that your mamma will interpose no difficulties."

So instead of going to the woods, Miss Max ran up to her dressing-room, and wrote a note to that effect.

THE LAST TOWN BESIEGED IN ENGLAND.

The last siege that ever took place in England was that of Carlisle, by the Duke of Cumberland, on the retreat of the Pretender from Derby. It was a mere matter of a few days. The duke secured three hundred and ninety-six rebel prisoners on the capitulation of the town, and among these was Colonel Townley, governor of the place, whose head soon afterwards bleached on Temple Bar.

But it is an earlier, longer, and more picturesque siege of Carlisle that we would make the subject of the present paper. In May, 1644, after the overthrow at Marston Moor, Montrose fled to Carlisle Castle, and was there besieged by the Earl of Calendar, who had pursued him out of Scotland. After the taking of York, in July, 1645, Sir Thomas Glenham, commander-in-chief for King Charles in the north, came, with his forces, to Carlisle, expecting that General Leslie would lay siege to Carlisle; and, indeed, in the following October, Leslie appeared before the town. The next day, however, he left Carlisle, and marched on to besiege Newcastle.

This respite the Carlisle garrison spent in fetching in corn from the neighbouring fields, and in bringing meat, salt, coals, and cows from Wigton. Provisions soon grew so abundant and cheap that an ox could be bought for eighteenpence. Sir Philip Musgrave, of Eden Hall, the king's lieutenant-general of Cumberland, was governor of Carlisle, and Sir Henry Stradling governor of the garrison. With them were Sir William Dalston, Sir Henry Fletcher, and other militia commanders, Philipson, a dashing cavalry officer, with some of the Whitecoat Regiment, and two hundred reformadoes, or officers discharged from the army by Cromwell's artful, self-denying ordinance. Sir Thomas Glenham was commander-in-chief.

A month later, Leslie, having filled up his regiments, returned and laid close siege to Carlisle, erecting his batteries at Newtown (a mile west of the town), and at Stanwick (on the north), Lord Kirkcudbright commanding at the latter place. Betwixt them and the town ran the Calder and the Eden, scarcely passable but by the bridges. On the north-east stood Colonel Lawson's guns, and at Harraby, near the gallows, Colonel Cholmley had placed his cannon. The Roundheads had four thousand horse and foot. The garrison and armed townsmen were about seven hundred. Leslie's head-quarters were at Dalston Hall (now a farm-house), four miles from the town. A party of Cavalier horse tried to surprise him on his arrival, but quarrelling about a leader and halting, the Cavaliers were ridden down by Captain Forester, Captain Birbeck was killed, and the rest chased for two miles. A few days after, Sir Thomas Glenham sallied out with a strong party of horse and a company of dragoons to attack Cholmley's battery at Harraby; but Captain Marshall and his dragoons, who had vowed to give no quarter, were beaten out after effecting an entry into the work. The suburbs were at this time all fired and pulled down, beginning with the houses and barns at Calder Bridge.

Six weeks passed in inaction, except for occasional skirmishes. The corn was taken from the citizens and rationed out from the magazine, and of the cattle the owners received only the head, heart, and liver, in addition to their fixed allowance. Every one had to give up his plate to be coined into money for the troops, and the citizens' houses were searched, to stop any malingering. The cattle in the fields outside the walls were duly guarded by a troop of cavalry, who kept their horses saddled and bridled, and their pistols in their holsters, ready at any movement of the enemy to mount, and charge. One day,

the enemy bearing down, the Cavaliers retreated till more troopers joined them from the city, then leaving the cattle by the Eden, they charged the Roundheads and drove them off, killing and wounding several, and taking two prisoners. Another day, some Cavaliers "vapouring" round Harraby, were attacked by the enemy, whom they chased to their batteries. Immediately the Scotch horse and musketeers began to swarm out of Newtown, but the Cavaliers slashed so many, that the musketeers ran behind Coldale Hall, and had the Royalists had a dozen foot they could have destroyed the enemy's batteries.

About this time Dr. Basire, Archdeacon of Northumberland, in a sermon reproved the garrison for excessive drinking, and the governor then appointed certain traders to supply each street with rations, although before that (such were the hopes of speedy relief) fifty bushels of malt had been used every week. Fuel growing scarce, the governor sent out all the horse and sixty foot with carts to Caldcoats (half a mile from the city), and within musket-shot of the Scotch works at Newtown, to bring away the timber of the houses in Leslie's very teeth. Half a score of the horse took four Scots and two cows, and being charged by Captain Noble and some Scotch horse, killed one of his men, unhorsed him, and brought him away prisoner, no Cavalier being hurt except one Simonds, who received a little cut on the head.

On the 28th of January, there was a pleasant rencontre that delighted the Cavaliers. Lieutenant Frisle, one of Leslie's officers lately arrived from France, and some dragoons, going on the Sands to catch a horse, marched over the Stone Bridge within pistol-shot of the wall, to carry off some linen that was drying there, there being no Cavalier horsemen at hand. The daring lieutenant blew a trumpet in defiance of the musketeers, who fired at him from the walls. John Hinks (alias Red Coat), a hot-blooded soldier, seeing this, could not contain himself, and, having no armour but his sword, ran out, and gave him five cuts on the head. The Scots at Stanwick seeing this, sent Lieutenant Barkly and another horseman to assist him; but gallant Hinks so galled them with stones, that Barkly, refusing quarter, was eventually twice struck to the ground, bruised, disarmed, and hauled by force into the town. Macarty, a friend of Hinks's, killed another trooper, and two other troopers arriving from the town, two more Roundheads were killed, and one of Leslie's dragoons was brought in with no less than seventeen wounds in his head; nevertheless, the hardy rascal recovered within a few months. Poor vaunting Lieutenant Frisle was courteously used, and his wounds being tended, he was released. As for the stout-hearted Hinks, Sir Thomas Glenham sent for him, and to reward the example he had set the garrison, placed in his horny palm a gold broad-piece.

On the 2nd of February, Philipson, the most chivalrous and daring of all the Cavalier captains, rode out with sixteen horse to take the air near Botcherby. Joined by ten more Cavaliers, Philipson charged fifty of the enemy's foot, and at the first dash of swords killed and took six, and pursued the rest up to their works. The Roundhead horse, eighty in number, were gallantly kept at bay by a few Cavaliers. One of them pursuing too close, was shot in the breast, and died four days after. The Puritan horse soon gathered two hundred strong from Cummersdale, Blackhall, and Harraby, but only cut off one Cavalier straggler.

On the 15th of February, some Carlisle gentlemen and gentlewomen, without arms, rode a-hunting into Blackhall Fields (two miles south of Carlisle), and were pursued by a Roundhead troop from Harraby, but escaped. The next day some Cavalier horse beat up Cummersdale (a hamlet on the Calder, opposite Blackhall). The Parliament horse drew out at the challenge, and lined the hedges with foot, but the Cavaliers scattered both. In this skirmish, Captain Story, a Cavalier of Brough, was wounded in the head. The Scots fired a pistol at his back, and thought they had killed him, but his arms were pistol-proof, and he leaped a hedge, and escaped out of their hands. On the 17th of February some Cavaliers on the same road, straying behind their troop, were set on by twenty horse. Arnold, a trooper, was shot in the arm, and the same bullet disabled the arm of the gallant Hinks. A day later, Sir Thomas Glenham, "admiring the sweet temper of the enemy," "sailed" out with all his horse, two hundred foot, scaling ladders, and fire-balls. The Cavalier scouts beat off the Roundhead scouts, who, at last seeing the Cavaliers within musket-shot of Newtown works, galloped back and gave the alarm. The Roundhead musketeers instantly fled, not awaiting the firing of even one musket, and the Cavalier horse pursued. In the mean time the Carlisle foot

destroyed the works, took the commander, killed four men, capturing a great number of cloaks and arms, and twenty-four of the cowardly musketeers. The next morning half a score of drunken Scotch troopers dashed over Etterby Ford, and rode as far as the bridge, when one of them being shot in the breast, and another having his horse killed under him, they retreated. Captain Lainham, snatching a horse from a boy, leaped on it and charged their leader, Captain Patten, whom he wounded mortally and brought in to die. The slain horse being "a very stately beast and fat," was dragged into the town, and Sir Thomas Glenham ate part of him at his own table

It was about this time that a ghost story (at least as well authenticated as most stories of this kind) threw a blue light upon the stern faces of the besiegers of Carlisle. The ghost of Captain Forester, a Roundhead officer, slain at the commencement of the siege, was said to appear nightly at the Botcherby battery, fiercely demanding of his old comrades if they were yet converted to the king, and when they cried "No," he would shout to Captain Philipson to fall upon them with horse and foot. On one occasion the Roundheads replied to this spirit's challenge by discharge of cannon, which at once brought reinforcements from their works at Stanwick, and two of their horsemen were drowned in crossing the ford at Rickerby (one mile and a half north-east of Carlisle). Major Barnes afterwards assured Philipson of the truth of this, and swore he could bring five hundred soldiers as eye-witnesses of the fact.

On the 1st of March, Corporal Wood and Lieutenant Bratlet stole out of the city, killed a Roundhead scout, whom they met near Botcherby, and got safe to the prince's army. That same day there was a parley with the enemy, and the sack went merrily round; but there was no talk of surrender, although only half a hoop of corn weekly was now allowed to each person, for there were two thousand one hundred bushels safe in the magazine. The same day intelligence coming that the prince had routed Fairfax, and killed two thousand Roundheads, there was great rejoicing at Carlisle, and the next day, as Leslie might be slinking off, the indefatigable Philipson rode to Newlathes and sent ten horse to Cummersdale, where they broke a company of foot, and pistolled four or five Scots with infinite satisfaction. On the 17th of March, Cornet Philipson (a brother of the captain), returned from Pontefract, where he had been to solicit aid from the king. While returning he was taken at Wetherby, and carried to York. Fairfax, finding the king's letter on Philipson, sentenced him to the rack the next day, but that same night the brave and slippery fellow leaped the walls and got away safe to Carlisle with the king's gracious promise to relieve the town by the 9th day of May. That night the Roundheads at Stanwick, looking across the Eden, saw the sky over Carlisle crimson with bonfires, and heard the roar of cannon that proclaimed the city's joy and defiance. Two days after this, Philipson, always full of fight, rode out to Blackhall with twelve horse, and charged a troop of sixty Roundheads. He was surrounded by two more troops from Botcherby and Harraby, and some of the troopers caught his bridle, and offered him quarter. But scorning to receive it from such crop-headed knaves, he slashed his way out and made good his retreat, having only one man wounded by Major Cholmley, who, pursuing close, ran him through the back. As they were entering the port Sir Thomas Glenham ordered them out again towards Newtown. At Catcoats they charged five times their number of Scots, pistol in hand, routed them, and killed one of their commanders. The Cavaliers suffered no hurt, but Philipson's horse was cut in the head. On the 22nd the enemy tried to entrap the Cavalier horse by sending false intelligence that the Westmoreland men had gathered at Penrith for their relief; but "old birds were not to be caught with chaff," says Tullie, the faithful and sarcastic chronicler of the siege. And nothing of importance occurred until the 28th of March, when the pleasantness of the day induced Sir Thomas Glenham, with some gentlemen and gentlewomen, to go out coursing near Botcherby. The Scots stood and watched them take a hare under their very noses, and at last made a feeble attack; but Captain Dixon running one of them through up to the hilt, they retreated. That same evening Quartermaster Wood and three more rode towards Botcherby. Captain Rose and half a dozen more tried to cut them off at the end of a stony lane. Wood and another turned on the enemy and drove back the pursuers, Wood slashing at Rose for eighty yards. If the other three Cavaliers had come up they would have been taken. Two days after this exploit, Wood, with two troopers and two of Sir

Thomas Glenham's servants, rode without orders towards Botcherby, and for mere love of adventure charged through fifty Scotch horse and routed them. Wood, in his retreat, was, however, shot in the groin; "he was hardly persuaded not to charge them again, but of this wound he died within a few days. The garrison lost in him a man of unparalleled courage and judgment in arms; yet, they lost more men in such unwarrantable skirmishes without order than in all commanded services in the siege."

Fodder, except thatch from houses, was all exhausted in the town by the 3rd of April, and the horses had to be sent out daily with a guard to graze. Sir Thomas Glenham, anxious to stir the country to relieve the town, sent Sir Thomas Dacre to Lanercost, to induce his tenants to fall on the Scotch on the 6th of April, but the heart of the Gilsland men failed them. This day all the cavalry were ordered out to surprise some cattle at Scotby. There were five parties sent, and in each of these about thirty horse. Captain Dixon's thirty were to ride straight to Scotby, and bring in as many cattle as they could. Forty-two reformadoes, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Minns, were to stay at the water-side and watch Harraby. Captain Philipson's thirty were to face Botcherby. The fourth party, sixteen horse, under Captain Scisson, was to guard the Gallows Hill. Captain Toppam, with twelve horse, was posted on St. Nicholas Hill, while twenty dragoons held the ford in case of a retreat. Dixon drove home forty-two cows, Philipson checkmating the enemy's horse; Leslie sent a company of musketeers to intercept Dixon at Durran Hill (a mile and a half east of Carlisle), but Dixon boldly drove his spoil within twenty yards of them, and lost only one horse and one cow. Horse and foot were soon pouring out to rescue the cattle, and Minns sent fourteen horse to harass the reinforcements. The Roundheads, despising this small force, marched by them without notice. Lainham, one of the fourteen, instantly bravely charged on their flank, routed the Scotch horse and foot, chased them through the town, slew five or six, wounded more, shot a Lieutenant Anderson in the thigh, and retreated with two prisoners, and only one man badly wounded.

It was about this period of the siege that the governor, finding his designs often betrayed, discovered the traitor to be a man named Head, who brought food into the town. On being seized, a letter was found on him. It was from Dick Lowry, a soldier of the garrison, to his wife at Wigton, desiring her to inform Major Barnes that the town could not hold out more than three weeks. Both Head and Lowry were put to the rack, and confessed their treason. On the 29th of April, Captain Toppam, having to guard the cattle while grazing, and finding Scotch musketeers holding some old walls at Catcoats Bank, stormed the hill. Upon this, Captain Noble, Lieutenant Fife, and some other quondam prisoners, held a parley with Captain Philipson, who guarded the hill, and brought up a store of sack, in hopes to make the Cavalier officers drunk, and so carry off the cattle. In the meanwhile, Noble stole out alone secretly for the Scotch cavalry, who, about five in the afternoon, drew out in five parties of fifty men each. Philipson had at the time only half a dozen horse ready, but his brother the cornet quickly put in order those grazing under the hill, keeping his ground in a very hot skirmish; eventually the brave Philipsons routed the enemy, who were brought off by some Scotch officers of Leslie's own regiment. "The Cavaliers," says Tullie, "in this engagement, were eighty horse, who performed as neat a piece of service as was at any time during the siege." Soon after this the Roundheads again tried their old tricks, suborning country people in large companies to rendezvous at Penrith, hoping that Sir Thomas Glenham, urged by the Cumberland gentlemen in the garrison, would send out all his horse to head them. But Sir Thomas was Yorkshire too, and sent three horsemen out to forage for news at Brougham Castle. Finding they were snapped up, he sent no more doves out of the ark. The cattle being nearly all eaten, the horse was divided into four parties, and sent over Etterby Ford to fetch cows from Cargo (three miles from Carlisle). The Cavalier commanders in this raid were the two Philipsons, Musgrave, Scisson, Toppam, and Minns. These last two captains, with forty-five foot, were to face the Scots at Newtown, and keep them in. The enemy made a show of coming to the cows' rescue, but the redoubtable Minns was in the way. The Cargo people ran after the Cavaliers, beseeching them to baste "the beggarly Scotch," who had promised to protect both them and their cattle. Moved by these appeals, the Philipsons sent ten troopers in with the cattle, and joined Minns and Toppam on Catcoats Hill. Toppam, who led the

forlorn hope against the Scots, in a gallant charge, was shot in the stomach, and soon after died. Captain Philipson, soured at this, fell on the Scots, beat them out of the town, and pursued them on the moor. Another party, with Cornet Philipson, charged with sixteen horse and chased the Scots towards Newlathes, where the reformadoes came up, and wounded and took many of the fugitives. The victorious foot stayed at Newtown, and stumbling on a barrel of strong ale, gave over firing at the enemy, and commenced drinking hard with true Cavalier recklessness. This encouraged the Scotch foot to renew firing. They shot one Cavalier roysterer through the nose, while the can was at his mouth. They lamed a second, and killed a third. The Carlisle soldiers were so drunk that they forgot to bring away the wounded man when they retreated with sixteen prisoners and horses, and stores of cloaks and hats. To prevent such reverses in the future the Scots raised a small work on the top of Catcoats Bank, securing their ground as far as Coldale Hall, and commanding a great part of Willow Holme, near the junction of the Eden and Calder. The garrison now began to graze their cattle on the Swift, to the east of the castle, and this set the Scots to work to plan a grand foray. It was a day that Captain Robert Philipson, who had the guard, was grazing the cattle as far as Botcherby Mill. Sir Thomas Glenham, seeing the barricade at Stanwick taken away, suspected some mischief, and ordered Philipson to come nearer the town with the cows, and to be very diligent and watchful. There was need of care, for about noon some eight hundred horse came powdering from Stanwick, St. Nicholas, Botcherby, and Rickerby. They instantly surrounded Philipson and the cattle; but he charging desperately through the enemy, brought away all the cattle but six cows and fifteen horses. Philipson ran his sword up to the hilt through a Scot named Kennedy. The fellow, turning sharp round, wrested the sword out of Philipson's hand, and set off to his own quarters at Parke Broom (three miles from Carlisle), with the sword still in his body, boasting that he had encountered and disarmed "little Philipson." A Scotch major was wounded, and a lieutenant killed. The Cavaliers only lost a trooper, and a poor old townsman who was not a soldier. Several unarmed servants were hurt. On May-day Tullie makes a note in his amusing Diary, which gives a very picturesque notion of many similar episodes of the siege. Robert Philipson, guarding the cattle on Willow Holme, heard the great bell of the city toll an alarm, and looking back to the battlements, saw an ensign with a flag, indicating the direction of some musketeers, who, from behind a hedge, were firing on the cattle. He at once beat these sportsmen from their covert, killing two and dispersing the rest. On the 3rd the cattle were taken to graze on Denton Holme, on the further bank of the Calder. From thence the Cavaliers foraged out to Newlathes, and killed a scout; and at Blackhall Wood, finding a troop of the enemy's horse grazing, tried to sweep them off; but a Scotch squadron saved them, and pursued the Cavaliers. Next day the elder Philipson, commanding the cattle guard, was menaced by three or four Scotch horsemen, but they drew off towards noon, one of them being mortally wounded by a shot from a fowling-piece. The enemy then lined a hedge with musketeers, whom Philipson drove away, killing two, but under a little hill was suddenly hotly charged by Major Cholmley and his troop. Philipson broke through them, unhorsing many, and, before they could regain order, was at them again, and so routed them that he might have cut all off if Lieutenant Ray, a slow fellow, had hurried up the reserve before he was overpressed.

A week after this exploit Philipson rode out to guard the cattle at Denton Holme, and being irritated by the enemy's foot firing from Stanwick Bank, towards noon sent a corporal with a party of twenty horse to ride quickly over the bridge (near the present bridge, which was erected in 1815). The Scots fired upon the party from an outwork, but seeing the Cavaliers come fiercely on, left their guns, and ran into the village. Philipson's men killed five, captured two, wounded four or five, took eight or nine horses, and brought them all away, losing only one horse of their own. If they had only had some foot the foragers could have brought in the Scotch cannon. The same afternoon the indefatigable Philipson rode out with six men to Legget Hill, at the east end of the Swift, near the confluence of the Petteril with the Eden, and carried off eleven of the enemy's horses that were grazing. Towards evening Philipson met the Roundhead cavalry, and with his musket shot Lieutenant Davison in the thigh, killing his horse; the rest fled. On the 11th of May there was skir-

mishing on the Willow Holme, a Scotchman shooting a Cavalier trooper as he fought with a comrade. Captain Scisson, who guarded the cattle, cut down two Scots, who fell as if dead, but rose up, "and with much ado recovered," which Tullie seems to imply was unworthy of even Roundheads. May 13th was a hot day. About supper time the great alarm-bell began to toll fast. The enemy's horse were bearing down from all quarters towards the cattle on the Swift. Upon this, daring little Philipson, snatching up a sword, galloped to the Cavaliers, who were in disorder, rallied them quickly, drove off the Roundheads, and galled them as they retreated. Immediately Captain Lainham, an undaunted Cornishman, with Andrew King, and two or three more, dashed over to the Scotch outworks at Stanwick, and brought away three of the enemy's horses. Unfortunately, young Philipson, over-rash, staying behind, was shot dangerously in the back by a boy. Our old friend Hinks that night sallied out on the Sands, and brought away some horses Lainham had left behind. Nearly one hundred bullets were fired at him from the Stanwick battery. That same evening a letter came to Sir Thomas Glenham from Skipton. It was from the king, who was at Chester, promising speedy relief if they could only hold out a little longer. On the 16th the Roundheads began a work on Swift Hill to debar the garrison from grazing on that side of the city. Philipson then sent out one hundred foot and forty horse to guard the cattle. The foot were in a ditch below Philipson's tower; the troopers sat on their horses while they grazed, being so near the enemy. The Scots drew out some foot, but retreated after losing one man. At nine o'clock Lord Kirkcudbright came with three hundred Scotch musketeers from Stanwick to break through the musketeers in the ditch, but they were so thrashed that they had to fall back. Philipson and his few horse then charged them, but they came on him as fast as he retreated towards his musketeers, upon which he charged again, and routed them, killing Captain Rose and two more. The Scotch carried away many led horses, but boasted they had not lost the riders. Four of Philipson's men were hurt, but none slain. The Cavaliers on the walls, unable to see for the clouds of dust, believed at first that the Scotch had enclosed Philipson, and were carrying him off to Stanwick. Imagine, therefore, their delight when glints of steel shone through, and Philipson reappeared, chasing the Scotch home with whistling sword and pistol flash.

On the 19th there was again some hot fighting. Cholmley had raised a work near the south port, which if allowed to remain would have stopped all the grazing. About ten o'clock, just as the work was well finished, Captain Moore sallied out of the English port with sixty foot, who marched to the south-west of the work. Captain Dixon, with sixty foot, advanced straight to the fort, and sheltered his men in a ditch very near. At the same time the Cavalier horse drew out of the town in five parties—one going towards the St. Nicholas work to prevent the enemy retreating there, when driven out of the new fort. Then Moore marched boldly on the Scotch, and returned no answer to their hot fire till he got within pistol-shot. A lucky fire-ball, thrown by one of Dixon's men, lighted on some loose powder in the work, and blew up spades, mattocks, and men. Upon that the Scotch leaped out of the work, and Moore and his men leaped in, killing Conyers, the commander, who stoutly defended himself. The Cavalier horse, meeting the fugitives full butt, cut them up cruelly, drove back one hundred foot coming from the greater fort, and then returned to the town with thirty-nine prisoners, many of whom were dreadfully scorched. They destroyed the battery, and set the water which the enemy had diverted from the mills in its right course. They brought back six dead Scots and one hundred muskets, and lost only one man, who was shot through the heart. Tullie closes the record of this most satisfactory day by saying, "In the afternoon they grazed their cattle where Troy once stood. I mean that bloody work." On the 26th there came a letter from Newark, to say the king had got as far as Latham House, in Lancashire, to their relief, and on the 30th Captain Blenkinsop came in with news that the king had entered Westmoreland, and that Leslie was collecting country carts for his baggage. The overjoyed garrison celebrated the news by eating at one meal three days' provisions, of which they soon bitterly repented. More false news was circulated on the 5th of June, when Major Baxter brought in a lie that the king had taken Manchester, and would be with them presently. Men believe what they wish to be true, and soldiers reduced to dogs, rats, and hemp-seed, were ready to believe anything. "Now," says Tullie, half pathetically,

"were gentlemen and others so shrunk, that they could not choose but laugh, one to another, to see their clothes hang as upon men on gibbets, for one might have put his head and fist between the doublet and shirt of many of them. The foot would be now and then stealing away, but not a man of the cavalry." On the 9th two men came in with greater lies than ever, reporting the king to be in Yorkshire. Two days after the receipt of this cheering, but wholly illusory, information, six troopers rode without order to Cummersdale Mill, and brought home fourteen bushels of corn, leaving the reserve cavalry watching at Denton Holme; while, on the second trip, Lord Dalhousie's Scotch regiment attacked the reserve, but were driven off. Makarty and Philipson, always in the thick of it, were left among the enemy, but they helped each other, cut themselves free, and returned to their party without hurt, except that Philipson was bleeding from a slight gash in the face. In the mean time, the troopers (fourteen now) with the corn, seeing the danger, threw away the grain and wheeled about for the town. Falling among a company of foot that fired fiercely upon them, the troopers resolved to break through Dalhousie's horse. The Scotch, mistaking these Cavaliers for their own party, asked them which was the best way to charge Philipson through the water. The prompt men replied, "This!" and every man directing his pistol at an enemy's face, charged through the whole body back to Philipson, who then charged also, and routed the Scotch regiment, killing thirteen and wounding many. In this action, a poor fellow from Carlisle, wearing a Scotch cap, was shot by mistake by one of his own side.

Hunger was so unbearable now, that resistance was no longer possible, and Philipson was sent to York to decide with Fairfax or Leslie as to whether he should surrender to the English or Scotch. The next thing Carlisle heard was great volleys of musketry from the besiegers' works, announcing the victory at Naseby. That afternoon, divers officers and soldiers came to the public bakehouses and took away by force all the horseflesh preparing for the poor. "Now," says Tullie, "the besiegers, perceiving the Cavaliers, who were scarce able to walk in the streets, not to issue out as they were wont, grew insolent, and vapoured amaine." The garrison had had but half a pound of horseflesh in four days. On the 20th of June the townsmen humbly petitioned the governor not to take away their horseflesh, saying they were not able to endure the famine any longer. Four days after, "a few women of the scolds and scum of the city" met at the Cross, railing at Sir Henry Stradling. On his threatening to fire on them, they replied they would take it as a favour, and he left them with tears in his eyes, saying he could not mend their commons. "Dr. Burnell, the chancellor," says Tullie, "was the only man who had any beer left, and he had a little barrel of strong ale known only to the governor." The first messenger sent by Leslie was made so drunk with this that he could give no rational account of what he had done. Leslie then sent a graver person, who, being assured of the surrender of the town, was demurely leaving, when Sir Thomas slyly kept him waiting at the Scotch port, and decoyed him into the chancellor's quarters, where he also was made drunk, and returned in the same pickle as the former, professing "that the garrison was everywhere full of strong drink." The next day, the 25th of June, the articles were agreed upon, and the city of Carlisle, "little in circuit, but great and memorable for loyalty," received a Scotch garrison. The treaty prescribed that all the Carlisle officers and soldiers should march out "with their arms, flying colours, drums beating, matches lighted at both ends, bullets in their mouths, with all their bag and baggage, and twelve charges of powder apiece." All the conditions of this treaty were faithfully kept by Leslie, except that in violation of the third article, that "no church be defaced," the Roundheads pulled down part of the nave of the cathedral, together with the chapter-house, cloisters, prebendal houses, and part of the deanery.

Sir Philip Musgrave was, after this, sentenced to death by the Roundheads, but escaped the night previous to the day appointed for his execution. He afterwards raised one thousand foot for the king, and defended the Isle of Man for the Countess of Derby. After the Restoration he was appointed governor of Carlisle. Sir Thomas Glenham was afterwards governor of Oxford for King Charles.

At the close of the war, Major Philipson (who figures so conspicuously in this narrative) was besieged for eight months in his brother's house on the island in Windermere. His brother, the colonel, at last raised a party, and relieved him from Colonel Briggs of Kendal, his persistent

enemy. Soon after this, "Robin the Devil," as he was called by the Roundheads, rode, armed to the teeth, into a church at Kendal during service, intending to pistol Briggs. Seeing his enemy was not there, the major turned his horse and rode quietly out; but the Puritans rousing and gathering round, cut the girths of his horse, and Philipson fell. Instantly calling his men, the major struck down the fellow who had seized him, clapped the loose saddle on his horse, vaulted on it, and dashed off towards Windermere, through the streets of Kendal, followed by all his troopers, who had been guarding the avenues of the church.

PASSING.

THE sun-motes glint across the eaves,
The light dust flickers on the leaves,
Calm is the sea, the heaven blue,
The roses blush the trellis through.

The barley-beards grow full and white,
Day lingers into hours of night,
The babbling brook is low and still,
And scarce can feed the toiling mill.

The summer glow is in the air,
The hay-fields yield an incense rare,
On the green earth, in sky above,
A halo gleams of life and love.

O happy days, O summer time,
O dreaming youth, in golden prime;
All that is bright, and pure, and sweet,
Shines when ye twain together meet!

'Tis so, and so 'twill ever be,
Youth plucks the blossom from the tree:
That which it sows, long years give root,
But only few may taste the fruit.

And we who passed long since our prime,
And bear the wrinkled stamp of time,
Look on and smile, look on and sigh,
Lock in our breasts the reason why.

COPHETUA THE SECOND.

IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

"So—spliced at last, old fellow?" said I, shaking hands heartily with my friend Augustus Meadfoot, whom I met in Pall Mall.

"I am 'spliced,' as you say," replied Augustus, rather stiffly; "but Jack, dear boy, I wish you would be a little choicer in expression. Splicing—not to mention that it conveys the idea of some species of repair, of which, I do assure you, neither my wife nor myself stand in the slightest need—is too familiar. Marriage, Milford, independent of its exalted duties and soul-stirring responsibilities, is a solemn—a majestic—thing."

"I believe you——" I fear I was about to add "my boy." Luckily, I didn't, but added: "My dear Meadfoot, call it as we will, it is plain the process agrees with you. You look radiant."

"My lustre is not fictitious," replied Mr. Meadfoot. "There is nothing, as you know, Jack, artificial about me. I am the happiest man out. I will not say that my Alice is, like her namesake, all my fancy painted her, for fancy had nothing to do with the matter. I always felt that the mawkish booby, jilted by Miss Grey, was served perfectly right, for falling in what he called love with a girl he had never seen. No, no. I came, I saw, and—ahem! —was conquered," concluded Augustus, with a candid smile.

"You told me of your purpose, but never the young lady's name. Am I acquainted with her family?"

"I—I am inclined to think not," replied Augustus. "Do you know Spuddington-le-Street?"

"The Lestreets of Ruthyn Castle?"

"No, of North Lincolnshire. Spuddington-le-Street is the nearest village to Spuddington-the-Less, which has only three cottages and a beershop, and is as sweet and primitive a little settlement as any of which rural England can boast."

"There is a commendable absence of brag, in the fact that it does not appear even in Bradshaw."

"It does not. I discovered it in an ancient road-book," said Mr. Meadfoot, "which constituted the entire library of a little inn at which I happened to be storm-stayed. The directions for finding it were sufficiently complicated and obscure to awaken the highest interest. On the following morning, carrying with me three days' provisions, I set forth and found it. I was rewarded."

Augustus paused, as if lost in happy recollections. After a few moments, finding he did not speak, I recommenced the conversation.

"You encountered Miss—Miss——"

"Shortcake, there," replied Meadfoot. "I had taken a footpath through some fields, principally attracted by the information that there was not only 'no thoroughfare,' but that spring-guns and man-traps were in profusion on the borders of a neighbouring copse. Now, although not wholly unacquainted with man-traps, I knew nothing of the mechanism of a spring-gun, and instinctively accepted the challenge. At the corner of the copse, I came upon another obliging notification, 'Beware the brindled cow.' No such animal was at the moment in sight, but continuing to

round the copse, I came suddenly upon a scene worthy of Watteau. A rustic maiden, seated on the three-legged stool of the period, was engaged in milking a particularly vicious and observant cow.

"Time was not allowed me to notice more. The brindled brute pinned me with its eyes, stood for a second as if petrified, then, with a kick that sent the milk-pail into the air in a cloud of white spray, and a wild stoop and flourish of the head, plunged furiously towards me. I saw the rustic maiden throw up her bare white arms, I heard a shriek, 'As you vally your life!' and, without pausing to make the calculation suggested, turned and leaped the deepest ditch and the prickliest hedge I ever met with in combination.

"But I was safe, for, scrambling up, I saw that the absurd animal had danced away to the other end of the meadow, where, in company with two quiet friends, and attended by an exceedingly small boy, she was grazing composedly as if nothing had happened.

"The demeanour of my maid-of-the-milking-pail was less satisfactory. She was standing, her hands pressed into her pretty sides, literally convulsed with laughter. 'I must stop this,' thought I, and, with what ease and dignity I could command, effected a sortie, and stood before her. Jack," continued Mr. Meadfoot, emphatically, "on my honour, that girl's beauty struck me like a sudden gush of light. Her fresh, flower-like face, her deep blue eyes, swimming with the tears of mirth, her milk-white teeth, of which a good many were visible, though the rather wide mouth, to do it justice, could contract itself at pleasure into the sweetest rosebud you ever saw, her royal wealth of hair, about nine-tenths of which had escaped from the coarse kerchief supposed to bind it, then her lithe and yet (as you turf fellows phrase it) 'furnished' figure, these—ah, well," concluded Augustus, "the wiseacre that announced man-traps beside that copse was not such a booby after all."

"Here we are, opposite my club. Come in and taste our sherry," said I. "You must finish the story of the disguised princess before we part."

"The sequel is even of stronger interest," replied Mr. Meadfoot, "as the sultana remarked when not altogether certain that she would be allowed to live to finish it. Humph! This sherry is sound. Her health, bless her."

"Amen. Whose?"

"Alice's. Patience; I wish to omit no particulars. I left my shepherdess speechless with laughter. My approach did not check her merriment.

"'Well, that were a queer start as ever I see,' she gasped, wiping her beautiful eyes with the corner of a very coarse apron. 'To see his boot heels a-poppin' through the hedge. Oh my! Oh my!' (Another peal of laughter.)

"'My dear girl,' I remonstrated.

"'I say, come, none o' that,' retorted the maiden, growing suddenly serious, with even a slight frown appearing on her smooth brow. 'Dear girl ain't my name.'

"'What is your name?'

"'Hen or Hem, as the case may be.' (A demure curtsy.)

"'May I, at least, be allowed to ask where you live?' I inquired, piqued, but interested.

"'Ho yes, sure,' replied my Perdita. 'I 'angs out, as Tom Turbary says, at Uncle Grumball's, down yeer.' And she pointed backwards with her thumb towards a hovel in the distance.

"'Your excellent uncle resides in that —edifice?' I exclaimed.

"'No, he don't reside in the cow-h'us. Farm's ahind the copse. But, deary me, whatever shall we do about the milk?' (touching the prostrate pail with her bare white foot. Though not small, it might have served for a sculptor's model.) 'Oh, sir, 'twas all along of you, coming so sudden upon Damson, which never see a gent in shiny boots afore.'

"'Do all the pretty feet in this neighbourhood go bare?' I ventured to ask.

"'There ain't none but mine,' she said, simply, and pressing one of them down into the spongy green surface of the meadow, she brought it up white and pure as the milk that had just been shed there. 'Well, I must walk my chalks, as Tom Turbary says,' continued my sylvan goddess, with a sigh.

"'Who the d——, I mean, who is this Turbary, whose choice expressions you seem to relish so highly?'

"The damsel drew up her lithe form.

"'Tom Turbary is him which keeps company with me—leastways, wants to' (blessed qualification!) 'and wouldn't never see me carrying all these things—pails, and stool, an' all—without saying, "Let me help 'ee,"' remarked Perdita, with a quick side-glance of her blue eye.

"'My darling child!—I—I beg pardon.'

I was shocked at my own remissness. I hastily added: 'In Mr. Turbary's, no doubt, unavoidable absence, and in his language, let *me* help 'ee.'

"'That's you,' said Perdita, briskly.

"I hardly thought it *was* me as I trudged along, carrying the pails, which the damsel imperiously confided to me, instead of the stool, which I should have preferred.

"'You have many a pleasant walk with Mr.—Turbary, I suppose—eh?' I inquired.

"'Hah! A many. Specially nuttin' time,' was the reply.

"'And he is very agreeable?'

"'Talks o' turmots, and such like.'

"'Clever, is he?'

"'Understands beastesses. Knows a good cow when he sis her,' replied the nymph, carelessly.

"The range of Mr. Turbary's abilities was certainly not alarming. I fell into a momentary reverie, from which I was aroused by the clinking of one of my cans against a gate-post.

"'Woa! Steady there!' said my lovely guide, as if addressing a horse. 'We can't afford to lose any more milk to-day. Farm's just round the next corner. Ha, ha, ha! If Tom could see me being helped by a swell, as he calls it!'

"'Swell as I am, I can collapse at pleasure, as you have seen,' said I, quietly lifting the wooden yoke from my shoulders, and placing the half-filled cans in safety on the ground. 'And now, before we part, won't you tell me your name?'

"'Alice Shortcake, sure.'

"'Shake hands, Alice, dear Alice.'

"She put her hand frankly in mine. It was singularly small and soft, and out of harmony, I felt, with the girl's condition in life.

"'What makes your hand so white?' I asked, half angrily.

"She snatched it quickly back.

"'I'm sure I don't know at all,' she said, ruefully, rubbing it hard with the other. 'I s'pose it's the milk. But,' brightening up, 'they're better in winter. I has chilblains awful.'

"'Alice, dear, I am very much obliged to Damson. She has given me a very happy half-hour. I am sorry it is over.'

"'So am I,' said Perdita, very softly, and without raising her eyes.

"'Good-bye, dear.'

"'Good-bye.'

"'But I must see your eyes.'

"'Well, there!'

"They flashed up bluely, and fell again, not, however, before I had detected a crystal drop on each lower lid, awaiting orders. A sudden impulse seized me.

"'Alice, darling, do you love—that is, intend to marry—this Tom Turbary?'

"'I hate 'm—in that way,' said the girl, with almost savage earnestness, which left no doubt of her sincerity.

"'And will you be his wife?'

"'Not if I knows it, as T—T—Tom——'

"But, in speaking, she burst into a passion of tears.

"'Now, Alice dear, one question more. Shall I go on my way?'

"No answer. Lids down, cheeks crimson, slight heave of the fair bosom.

"'Do you wish me to stay?'

"'Can't say—but what—I doos,' was the half-whispered reply.

"'I almost wish you couldn't,' I thought. But if the grammar was loose, the sense was perfect. 'Alice, dear, do you know what I am thinking of?'

"'Damson,' coquettishly.

"'Do you know what I desire most in the world? To marry Alice Shortcake.'

"'Oh law!'

"'Even so, my darling. Marriage law. What say you?'

"Alice looked up, with eyes laughing through tears.

"'To think that you should a been afeerd o' Damson. (O, them boot-heels!) Why, you're the boldest gentleman I ever did heer tell on. You doesn't know me from Haddam.'

"'That we are both descended from that stock is enough for me," I said. "Ignorance, Alice, is the misfortune I am seeking to remedy. Help me. Do you like me, Alice?'

"'Very much indeed,' said my candid shepherdess.

"'Is my being a gentl—that is, as Mr. Turbary would call it, a swell, very much against me?'

"'Likes 'n, rather 'n not.'

"'Then you will be my wife?'

"'No I woan't,' was the reply. 'Leastways, not now.'

"'When, Alice?'

"'Listen,' said the girl, raising her blue eyes at last, and fixing them steadily on mine. 'Don't ye come aneer me, nor write to me, nor even think of me, if you can help it, for three months. Then, if you still remember Alice Shortcake, I won't say but you'll find her where you seen her first, in the meadow by the copse, a-milking Cowslip (which is quieter than Dam-

son), about sunset. Go now, sir, if you please. That's *your* road, alongside the hedge, past the pound where the donkey is —and—(well—God bless 'ce, anyways) here's *mine*.'

"The white feet went twinkling down the road. I was alone.

"Well, Jack, I have little more to add, but that's significant. As luck would have it, I found in the incumbent of the adjoining parish my old college friend, Hyndman. He introduced me to the curate of Spuddington, who was well acquainted with the respectable old Grumballs, and knew the bright creature who had, from a child, been the light of their house, as she was now the aid and the solace of their declining years. Alice had been sought in marriage by every celibate clod within a radius of ten miles; nay, even the remote market-town of Ditchingford had sent its suitor. All in vain. Mr. Thomas Turbary's chances had indeed been spoken of as fair, but the opinion was found to originate with himself, and to be devoid of any more foundation, than that old Mr. Grumball had, for some time, owed him (Mr. Turbary) a 'little matter of money.'

"Jack, you know what I have always said. Simplicity and truth for me. I am wearied of the artificiality of what is ironically termed 'good society,' its polished hypocrisies, its gilded meanness, its immeasurable falsehood, its smiling hate. What, if you sometimes lose in refinement? You are royally repaid in truth. Leave your educated sweets, your delicate human exotics, for those who prize such fribble. The hardy, honest wayside flower for me.

"Sir, I returned to Spuddington-the-Less. On that day three months, at set of sun, my shiny boots reflected his parting glow as they rounded the copse, and marched, without flinching, straight upon a group of cows, patiently awaiting the attentions of the whitest-fingered milkmaid that ever jingled can.

"I forbear to describe the meeting. Enough that, in three short weeks, which seemed as many years, I married Alice Shortcake, my friend Hyndman officiating, and my ex-rival, Tom Turbary (resplendent in a bottle-green coat) enacting the part of best man.

"What happened to my darling during those three months I cannot say. In grace and propriety of manner she might have lived in a circle of duchesses! My only terror is that she should become too refined. Except in little faults of grammar, and occasional expressions of the Turbarian school—which I correct jocosely—Alice is perfect, sir—perfect. As I said before, I am the happiest fellow extant. Come down to our cot at Hammersmith and see. The honeymoon is not over, but you are an old friend. Thanks; no more sherry. Hi there, hansom! Hammersmith."

CHAPTER II.

THE next day but one, I visited the married turtles. Meadfoot was alone, in the front garden.

"She has run in for a moment," he said, "but will be down directly. A little nervous, you see, at first, in society that she——. Do you know she asked me twice at breakfast how she should behave! I was a little impatient the second time, and answered: 'Exactly as is most natural to you, Alice. I wish my friend to see and know precisely whom I have married, without artifice or affectation of any kind.' Here she comes!"

Mrs. Meadfoot came tripping along the path, holding out both her pretty hands. She was in appearance all—and more than all—her husband had depicted her. But her first words startled me a little:

"Well, Jack, how's yourself?"

"My dear! my dear!" said Augustus, rather hastily, "Mr. Milford is only 'Jack' to his male friends! And, inasmuch as he cannot be anybody but himself, a little less stress, my darling, on the relative pronoun."

The pretty lips pouted for a moment, then parted, a sunny smile revealing the whitest teeth imaginable.

"How tired you must be!" Alice continued. "Especially if you stumped it all this way."

"Ahem!" said Meadfoot.

"My dear?" said Alice, opening her innocent blue eyes.

"Nature, darling, made man a walking, not a stumping, animal."

"Oh, I'm so sorry," said the beautiful creature, corrected; "I done as I was bid."

"I trust, my love, that you will never 'dun' anybody. What you may *do* is another grammatical question altogether," replied her husband.

Alice looked a little puzzled; but a topic being started on which she conversed with perfect ease and propriety, both recovered their equanimity, and Meadfoot was evidently delighted at the impression his little wife was making on me.

"Well," he remarked, presently, "I must leave you two together for a few minutes, while I despatch my letters." And with a glance at once tender and cautionary, he went into the house.

Mrs. Meadfoot continued the conversation, and, without the slightest effort or display, positively astonished me with her intelligence and mental culture. In a few minutes we were summoned in to lunch, and here again all went charmingly until Alice, as if suddenly recollecting her duties as hostess, asked me if I would not take some more "swizzle?"

"My love!" ejaculated Augustus, much shocked. "'Swizzle!' You seem to have reserved some most extraordinary conversational gems for my friend. Bitter beer, if you please. Bit-ter beer."

"Oh, now, Augustus, dear, you told me," pleaded Alice's sweet full voice, her eyes brimful of tears.

"Told you, darling? Told you to be vulgar?"

"No, no, dear. Natural. 'Exactly as was most natural,' you said. So I tried to remember the words I used when I was natural, and hadn't learned a bit. And, oh! I couldn't think of any more!" Another sob.

"Well, well, my love," said Meadfoot, laughing heartily; "Milford, having now learned your natural gifts, may prefer the acquired. But, oh—yes. . . . Good Heaven! it is that woman!" he continued, rising hastily, much disturbed, as a coronetted carriage, drawn by magnificent bays, drew up at the gate.

Alice, blushing like a very rose, seemed to partake of her husband's annoyance, and, either from a sign from him, or from an impulse of her own, vanished from the room.

"It is my aunt-godmother, the Dowager Countess of Haughtington," Meadfoot explained; "the proudest woman on earth, and the only visitor I dread. She heard of my marriage, was furious, and now honours us with this early visit, impatient to wound my poor little rustic wife with her refined sarcasms, or crush her with her haughty condescension. Excuse me, Jack, I shall not be long. She shall have no lunch, if she stops a fortnight," added Augustus, spitefully, as he left the room.

The countess (he afterwards told me) met him with the sweet, but rather diabolical smile, well known to her enemies—and these were not a few—as meaning mischief. She had, moreover, a cordial manner of extending her arms, which forcibly recalled that famous instrument of execution, which—using the same gesture—folded the criminal to a bosom richly set with spikes five inches long.

"How shall I plead for pardon?" demanded the kind lady, sweetly. "Dearest Augustus! My jealousy lest any one should welcome my lovely niece before me, compelled me to forestal permission. I am positively wretched till I hold her in my arms."

"Your misery, my dear aunt," said Meadfoot, quietly, "shall last no longer than your niece requires to take off her cooking-apron, smooth her hair, and practise the curtsy with which she, no doubt, intends to meet your ladyship's condescension."

"You are jesting, I suppose," said Lady Haughtington. "But, in any case, why this preparation? True elegance and refinement are independent of such aids."

"My wife was a dairy-maid and farm-servant," said Augustus, slowly, looking his aunt in the face. "And your ladyship knows it."

The countess coloured slightly, and if, as asserted, people do sometimes "look daggers," the point of a very sharp one glistened, for a second, in her eye. But she sheathed it instantly. War was not her game.

"My boy, I do know it," she replied, in a tone of condolence that was not entirely hypocritical. "Well, I will not say that I rejoiced. The noblest blood of England cannot see itself suddenly allied to the poorest without repugnance. But there, it is a fact accomplished. And now," she added, with a bewitching frankness that would have deceived any but the forearmed, "I have a petition. Will you grant it?"

"I am too sensible of your friendship, my dear aunt, to refuse anything you are likely to ask," replied that humbug Augustus.

"Accord me then the pleasant duty of introducing this wild rose of yours into those circles where her fresh uncultivated loveliness, her natural grace and sweet simplicity, will place her at once among the most admired."

"In other words," said Meadfoot, calmly, "take possession of my wife while yet unaltered in her rustic thoughts and ways, and, in revenge for the connexion I have given you, make her, through her supposed vulgarity, her ignorance, her awkward

demeanour and dowdy attire, the laughing-stock of every acquaintance of your lady-ship—and I fear they are many—whose selfish souls can batten on such food. Calm yourself, if you please, Lady Haughtington. I do but repeat your own incautious words, reported to me by one on whose word I can rely. Quickly as you have found us, my dear aunt, your kindly purpose has, you see, been beforehand with you."

Lady Haughtington rose up, white with rage.

"You are right, sir," she hissed through her set teeth. "That was my purpose. Do you imagine that anything less could have induced me to cross that threshold? That anything but hate—unmitigated hate and biting revenge—could have tempted me to look upon the vacuous visage of this dairy wench—this farm drudge—this barefooted beggar-girl, whom you—King Cophetua the Second—have plucked from the ditch, to make your wife? You miserable fool, farewell! I have done with you."

"Will you not see my wife, Lady Haughtington?" asked Meadfoot. "In the society of which your ladyship is the most distinguished ornament, courtesy, I think, suggests——"

"I will not see her. My carriage, sir."

"But she is here," said her nephew, as Alice, simply, but tastefully, dressed, tripped into the room with the grace of a princess. Augustus thought he had never seen her look so fair.

The countess, watching at the window for her carriage, did not deign to move.

Stepping forward, Meadfoot took his wife's hand, and drew her towards the window.

"My wife, Lady Haughtington, expects your greeting."

The countess turned like a tigress brought to bay. What passionate words the high-bred lady would have permitted herself to utter can only be surmised, for, as her flashing eyes fell upon Alice, their fury died away. Her whole aspect changed. The flush of anger gave way to a deadly pallor, and the whole stately figure quivered for an instant, as if about to fall.

"Who—what—is this? Rosa!" she gasped out, faintly. The lips remained open, as if further utterance failed.

"My name is Alice."

'Voice, too; eyes, lips, hair! Child, your mother's name? Speak! What was she called?"

"I never knew her," said Alice; "but"—taking a locket-miniature from her bosom—"here is her likeness, and here, at the back, two letters, R. V."

"Rosa Vavasour!" murmured the countess, with deep emotion. "It is the finger of Heaven. I need not ask you how they knew this to be your mother's face. Are you not her living image?"

"You knew her, aunt?" asked Meadfoot, eagerly.

"Knew her! She was my sister. That Aunt Rosa, whose name and memory have been so banished from our tongues and hearts, that it is little wonder you have forgotten such a being ever had existence. She was the very jewel of our hearts, but she made a mean and secret marriage, and we cast her off. They died in poverty, unnoticed, unforgiven, and their one child—we knew that one had been born to them—was adopted by some compassionate neighbour, in the sequestered village in which they had resided under a borrowed name. We never sought the orphan, rejoicing, in our pride, that she should be thus, as it were, cut off from our line. But, Augustus, Providence has rebuked and overruled our selfish ends. You have been directed to the orphan's home. You have married your *cousin*. Forgive me, both of you," concluded the countess, shedding, for once in a way, genuine tears, as she folded Alice in her arms. "I lament my pride and passion. Henceforth, my children, give me what love you can, as I, in all sincerity, offer you mine."

Among the presentations at a drawing-room, that occurred shortly after the interview above described, I noticed: "The Hon. Mrs. Meadfoot, on her marriage, by her aunt, the Countess of Haughtington."

AN OLD PROJECT AND A NEW ONE.

A Penny well Bestowed. Such is the title of a folio sheet of two pages, printed and circulated in London in the year 1680, a copy of which recently found its way into the possession of a dealer in waste paper, and from his possession passed into ours for a consideration, more in accordance with its interest and curiosity than with its physical weight. The full title runs, A Penny well Bestowed; or, a Brief Account of the New Design contrived for the great Increase of Trade, and Ease of Correspondence, to the Great Advantage of the Inhabitants of all Sorts, by conveying of Letters or Pacquets under a Pound Weight, to and from all parts within the

Cities of London and Westminster, and the Out Parishes within the Weekly Bills of Mortality, for One Penny. The colophon bears the words, "London: printed for the Undertakers by Thomas James, at the Printing Press in Mincing-lane. April, 1680." It was said on high authority, more than two thousand years ago, that "there was nothing new under the sun." And we of the present day, who owe so deep a debt of gratitude to Sir Rowland Hill for the boon of the penny post, may admit without derogation from his merits, or the wish to deprive him of any portion of the credit fairly belonging to him, that the germ of his great idea is to be found in an anonymous publication thrown upon the world nearly a hundred and twenty years before he was born. Possibly Sir Rowland never heard of it, for we should remember, as Coleridge recommends us in all cases where plagiarism is charged and cannot be proved, "that there are such things as fountains in the human mind, and that every stream we see flowing does not necessarily proceed from a perforation made in some other man's tank." But even if the great postal reformer of the nineteenth century borrowed his thought from a predecessor in the seventeenth, none the less are our thanks due to him for converting into a living fact that which was formerly an unproductive fancy, just as we render homage to the practical genius of James Watt for the improvement of the steam-engine, which others had invented, but had not been able to turn to account.

The author of A Penny well Bestowed, like other original thinkers, was in advance of his time. "There is nothing," he said, "that tends more to the increase of trade and business than a speedy, cheap, and safe way of intelligence, much being obstructed and more retarded in all places where that is wanting. For as money, like the blood in natural bodies, gives life to trade by its circulation, so correspondence, like the vital spirits, gives it sense and motion. And the more that these abound in any place the more doth that place increase in riches, strength, and vigour." This was said in 1680. It was said again, in other words, and with higher authority, in 1838, when Sir Rowland Hill's plan was before the House of Commons. The first reformer, however, knew his public too well to imagine that his project would meet with immediate or cordial acceptance. "It is not," he wrote, "to be expected in this age that any new design can be contrived for the public good without meeting many rash censures and impediments from the foolish and malicious, therefore 'twas not likely this should escape the common fate; yet we hope to all the reasonable and candid, who are willing to understand their own interest, that this paper may be satisfactory." The design was to provide means for the delivery of letters and parcels throughout the metropolis hourly every day, from six in the morning until nine at night—fifteen deliveries in all—a frequency which the modern Post Office, with all the improvements it has made during the last thirty-three years, has not yet attained. Whatever may have been the opinion of the public on this scheme, the opinion of the Post Office authorities was decidedly hostile, not only to the carriage of parcels of a pound in weight, but of letters at a penny. The Post Office would not work the scheme itself, nor allow any one else to do so. Nevertheless, in 1683 a penny post was established for London and the district within the bills of mortality, but without that frequency of delivery which, next to the cheapness, was the life and soul of the projected improvement. The Post Office at that time was in its infancy. Its revenues were farmed out to a contractor, who paid the government a round sum for the monopoly of conveying letters, and he levied such rates upon the public as enabled him to make a profit by his bargain—rates that were regulated upon a scale of distances, and upon the actual paucity, not upon the probable multiplicity of correspondence. The penny post was never extended to the provinces. Owing to mismanagement, it soon ceased to be remunerative in the metropolis, and was replaced by a twopenny rate, which remained in operation until Sir Rowland Hill swept it away, within the memory of living men who have not yet reached the grand climacteric.

The wisdom of our ancestors is not always to be sneered at, as this document and its history show, and it strikes us that the idea of conveying packages, a pound in weight, to and from every part of the metropolis, might be advantageously carried into effect in our time, with certain extensions and limitations which we proceed to explain. Mr. Lowe, our present Chancellor of the Exchequer, granted a boon to newspaper proprietors and to newspaper readers, which latter class already includes a majority of the population, and will, it is likely, under the operation of the new Education Act, include at no very remote time nearly

the whole community, by enacting that any newspaper weighing six ounces and under, might pass through the Post Office to the remotest ends of the realm for the sum of one halfpenny. This is nearly half-way towards the concession which we propose to ask, namely, that the Post Office should convey any printed book, new or old, to any part of the country at the uniform rate of one penny per pound weight, and of twopence for two pounds, and under. The boon bestowed upon political and periodical literature by the halfpenny rate is universally acknowledged; and if we consider, as has been said of old, that the chief glory of any country is its literature, we think the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Postmaster-General would do well to devote their attention to the reform we advocate in the interest alike of authors, of publishers, of readers, and of the revenue. To purchase a new book in London, the great mart and emporium of literature, as of everything else, is easy enough, but to purchase a new book in a provincial town or a village is a matter of time, difficulty, and unnecessary expense. The retail bookseller, if there be one in the place, which is not often, especially in the villages, has to write to the London or Edinburgh publisher for the volume which the purchaser requires, and it is generally a month before the order is completed. The publisher makes up his monthly, and sometimes fortnightly, parcel, and the purchaser has to await his convenience. By means of the penny postage rate for a pound weight of literature, the reader and the author, or at all events the reader and the publisher, would be brought into direct and immediate communication, without the intervention of the costly and dilatory middle-man, to the very great advantage of the producer and the consumer. The middle-man is generally a miscellaneous dealer in stationery, nick-nacks, newspapers, and periodicals, as well as in books, and will not always take the trouble to write a letter to a publisher for a single volume, to oblige a stranger or an infrequent customer. Political literature, great though its claims may be upon the favour of a liberal and progressive government, such as that of Great Britain, is not the only branch of literature which requires a freer dissemination than existing agencies supply. It does not include the history, the divinity, the science, the romance, and the poetry, which are the glorious heritage of our people; and which, quite as much as the current history and opinion contained in the newspapers, deserve to be spread over the land by the same convenient and well-regulated machinery that supplies us with our letters of business or affection.

No doubt the project will not at first recommend itself to the favour of the retail dealers in books, any more than railways and steam-engines recommended themselves to the owners of stage-coaches, gas to the tallow chandlers, or the spinning-jenny to the hand-loom weavers. As our old friend of 1680 says, in reference to the porters and other people who fancied they might lose employment and bread by the adoption of his larger project, "If it were granted to be prejudicial to the porters (which I do not allow), yet the lesser ought to yield to the greater, and the private to the public good, seeing that in all well-regulated governments the public good was never forced to stoop to private conveniency. For if so, printers and guns must have been suppressed for copyists and fletchers (bowmen), and public waterworks for the sake of tankard bearers." The question is one solely for the decision of the Government and the Post Office, and we are glad to have the opportunity of calling public attention to it in these columns.

PLOGARRIAN.

IN SEVEN CHAPTERS. CHAPTER VII.

THE storm had ceased, and it was fair weather, when the curate, having remained with his penitent to the last, was at liberty to return to his home, carrying with him the document mentioned at the close of the last chapter. But he did not, smooth as the sea now was, avail himself of the offer of the young fisherman who had brought him to Tresneven to take him back across the bay in his boat, preferring to start on foot for a three hours' walk by the coast.

He had much to think of; many thoughts were seething in his mind, on which he had had no time to dwell while the duty of smoothing that old man's passing hour was the foremost one to be attended to. But he wished to think over the strange facts with which he had so strangely been made acquainted in all their various bearings and aspects. And the solitary walk round the coast of the bay would give him an excellent opportunity for such self-communing.

So then he, Jean Delaroche—John of the Rock, as good Captain Morel had, in grimly literal accordance with the facts of the case, named him—he, the curé of Tregastel, was a De Kergonnec of Plogarrian, and,

more than that, was the rightful heir to, and owner of, the property. The Monsieur Gregoire of the terrible history told by the dying Morvenec was his uncle, the younger brother of his father, to make way for whose succession to the property he, John of the Rock, had been left to perish by the death from which he had been so wonderfully rescued. And more than this—and the following train of thought was among those which pressed into the foreground of his mind—this same Gregoire de Kergonnec was the father of the man who had won the heart of Marie Morel.

The fact that such wooing had been followed by such winning was but too well known to him. Though he had abstained in that bitter and cruel hour of his rejection from making any inquiry of Marie herself, he had not been allowed to quit Rouen in ignorance upon the subject. There are always friends kind enough to carry tidings such as those. And if gossip had not meddled with Marie's secret, the young seminarist had been made the confidant of all poor Mademoiselle Vezin's hopes, and fears, and disappointments on the subject. Talking to Jean Delaroche she deemed to be pretty much the same thing as talking to a brother of Marie's. And when the young priest left Rouen, he knew that he left the heart which it had not been given him to win, as desolate and as broken as his own.

And now what did he mean to do? What course was he to make up his mind to take? It was clear that he was true heir to, and owner of, a considerable landed property, and it admitted of very little doubt that he might, by virtue of the evidence contained in Morvenec's dying testimony, and of that which Morel could give, readily compel the restitution of that which was rightfully his. Ah, could this knowledge have come to him earlier, have come to him in time! Could it have been in his possession on that terrible day when he slunk back to his seminary, knowing that there was to be no share in the happiness and joy of the warm world outside its gates for him. But no. He would not wrong Marie by such thoughts. He did not believe in any such. It would not have availed him. He knew that no such consideration could or would have changed the fact that Marie loved another man, and did not love him.

And now what would this property be to him? He might go and live where he would—in Rouen, in Paris, if he pleased—but always a lone man. He might go and live a life of what is called ease, and eat and drink his revenues—alone! The curé of Tregastel was not a man to whose imagination any feature of such a life would smile. Better, better a thousand times labour on in the path into which the hand of Providence had guided him—labour on faithfully in that high vocation, one of the most awful and most beneficent duties of which he had even now been performing. Once—once he had looked back from the plough to which his hand had been set, and that looking back had been the cause to him of anguish unspeakable, of a pain which had run, was running, and would continue to run through the web of his life like the one-coloured thread which indelibly marks the rope of which it forms a part. Never again would he be tempted to repeat the error. And if such was to be his life, what to him was this estate that should have been his?

Nevertheless, it was not right that this crime should be passed over as if it had never been done. It was not right that that guilty uncle of his should go to his grave, thinking that the crime he had purposed had been consummated in all its atrocity. It was fitting that he too should have the assurance, which had been so wonderfully granted to his accomplice, that murder had been done only in intention, and that his soul should not be so weighed down by the consciousness of a crime which no repentance could repair, as to be by its despair prevented from turning in penitence to God. No. Gregoire de Kergonnec must be made aware that the nephew lived whom he had sought to destroy.

And this cousin of his—this young man for whose sake, or, at least, in whose interest this wickedness had been planned, this cousin who loved Marie, and whom Marie loved, loved with a hapless love that was to make her heart as cold and desolate as his own.

And then suddenly, suddenly as a lightning flash, when his mind had reached this point in his meditations, there came an idea into his mind, which less than a minute of concentrated thought turned into a determination.

He had been walking very slowly along the shore of the sea, as the meditations which have been described were passing through his mind. But the immediate result of the determination which he had taken was to quicken his steps. Not that his arrival at the lone Tregastel parsonage an hour sooner or an hour later could make or mar aught in the execution of the resolution he had formed. But it is natural to a man who doubts to saunter, natural to

the man whose doubts have found a solution to be turned thereby into a man of action, and to adopt the gait and bearing of one accordingly.

Yet all that he could do that night towards the putting his resolve into effect, when he reached his home, was to ascertain, what he was as yet wholly ignorant of, the whereabouts of the home and the property of his uncle. He knew that the name of it was Plogarrian, having heard that Alain de Kergonnec was of Plogarrian. And, knowing this, he had no difficulty in ascertaining that the place was in the immediate neighbourhood of Audierne.

And on the following morning the curé of Tregastel set out on a journey into the neighbouring department.

There were no railways in those days, and, measured by the means of locomotion which then existed, the journey undertaken by the curé was a long one. On the first day a cross-country conveyance, misnamed a diligence, which resembled a colossal covered gig, holding nine persons, and drawn by one horse, with much ado, and by dint of early departure and late arrival, brought him to Carhaix, situated as near as may be in the centre of the province of Brittany. And on the following day a similar vehicle enabled him to reach Quimper. Two-thirds of the next day were employed in journeying thence due west to Audierne.

The poor curé's heart beat fast, and he looked about him eagerly as he approached the place of his birth. The country, though so near to the terrible and famous Pointe du Raz, was, in the immediate neighbourhood of Audierne, of a more smiling and less desolate character than that part of the northern coast of the province in which his own present lot was cast. There were green woods and fertile fields around him, and a smiling sea gently lapping the sands of a low rockless shore before his eyes, as he reached the little village-town of Audierne, and had the direction of Plogarrian pointed out to him. On those fields and woodlands, then, his eyes had first opened, and, if right were done, they should belong to him.

He extricated himself as well as he could from the huge vehicle when it drew up at the inn in the main street of Audierne, and, looking around him as he alighted on the pavement, set himself to consider the somewhat embarrassing point, how he should begin to set about the object he had in view.

The first thing was to ascertain the exact situation of Plogarrian, and that, at least, was simple and easy.

There was an old gentleman—evidently the individual most entitled to that appellation among the little knot of idlers gathered to witness the arrival of the diligence—standing with his hands behind his back, enjoying the last rays of the winter afternoon sun, and apparently having nothing in the world to do but to extract what little mild amusement he could from observing the travellers as they descended from the carriage. He might be a man of some seventy-five or so, with a florid, red face, the colour of which deepened in a somewhat tell-tale manner as it approached the point of the nose, and an abundance of perfectly white hair.

It was clear that he had nothing better to do than to answer any questions that might be asked of him, and to him, therefore, the curé, accosting him with a courteous bow, addressed himself:

"Could monsieur be so obliging as to inform me, a perfect stranger to this part of the country, in which direction Plogarrian lies?"

"That can I, your reverence. Nobody better. I can do better for you than that, if you wish to go to Plogarrian. I can show you the way, for, as it happens, I am myself on the point of starting for a walk thither," returned Monsieur le Docteur Corseul, for he it was whom the curé had addressed.

The offer was courteously accepted by the priest, and the two men set off on their short walk together.

"Is it indiscreet to ask," began Corseul, as soon as they were clear of the town, "if your reverence's visit to Plogarrian has reference to the event which is to take place next week?"

"Not the least indiscreet, my dear sir," said the curé; "but the answer to the question may be found in another, which I hope you will not find indiscreet. What is the event you allude to? I was not aware——"

"Ah, then you are not, I presume, acquainted with the family. The event is nothing less than the marriage of Monsieur Alain de Kergonnec with the heiress of one of the largest properties in this neighbourhood. It is to come off on Monday next."

"Indeed! Monsieur Alain de Kergonnec is the only member of the family with whom I have any acquaintance. I had the pleasure of knowing him slightly a few years since at Rouen. And I was aware of the proposed marriage with the lady you allude to — Mademoiselle de Tressinien. But I had imagined that it was to come off

sooner than this; in fact, that it had taken place long ago."

"It was intended that it should have done so. When Alain was at Rouen, we hoped that the marriage would have taken place as soon as ever the lady was of sufficient age. It was necessary to wait a year or two after the betrothal had been solemnised, because Mademoiselle de Tressinien was fifteen only at that time, and her family were unwilling that she should be married so young. And then other causes of delay arose," continued Corseul, with a heavy sigh; "Alain's mother, Madame de Kergonnec, died. She was my daughter, Monsieur le Curé, and you conceive—Monsieur de Kergonnec, indeed, would have pressed on the marriage; more quickly, to say truth, than the general opinion in these parts would have deemed becoming. But Alain was a good son, who had loved his mother well," continued the old man, wiping a tear from his eye with his blue checked cotton handkerchief as he spoke, "and he resisted the being thus hurried. And, you conceive, Monsieur le Curé, I supported him in his wish for a little delay. And then, when the time had come when the marriage might have with propriety been solemnised, Mademoiselle de Tressinien fell ill. Ah, you know what is said of the cup and the lip! So the upshot has been that they are not married yet, but will be, I hope and trust, as fast as the church can bind them, on Monday next."

The curé had remained perfectly silent while his companion had been thus speaking, and he continued so when he ceased. He was meditating deeply.

"Here we enter the Plogarrian property," said Corseul, after walking awhile in silence. "There you can see the shore of the bay, that is the bay of Audierne, curving away there to the south, with the woods coming almost down to the shingles. All those are the Plogarrian woods. And the value of them is rising every day."

The curé paused a minute in his walk, and gazed over the landscape in the direction pointed out to him by his companion. But he resumed his walk again still without speaking. He thought that he saw his way to a determination which was very pleasant and comforting to his heart. He thought he saw his way; but before he could do so quite it was necessary that he should learn one or two things.

It was necessary, in the first place, that he should see and speak with Alain de Kergonnec.

"I was far from thinking that I should have to congratulate Monsieur Alain on such an occasion," he said, at last, as soon as his resolution was taken, "though I would not pass so near his home without renewing our former acquaintanceship."

"I am sure he will be glad to see any of his old Rouen friends. I may tell him that——"

"Delaroche—the Reverend Jean Delaroche. I had not taken orders when I had the pleasure of knowing your grandson, monsieur."

"Stay. That's he, I think, with his gun over his shoulder, strolling along under the hedge yonder. Alain!" he shouted, with a force of lungs that many a Parisian young man in the flower of his age could not have rivalled, "Alain, mon garçon!"

The man he had pointed to looked round, and then began to cross the field leisurely towards them.

"Here's an old acquaintance of yours, Alain, à ce qu'il parait, come to say 'bon jour,' and wish you joy of your marriage—the Reverend Monsieur Delaroche. He thought that he should find you a married man of a year or more's standing!"

"Delaroche!" cried Alain; and the blood rushed to his head and face as he spoke. For all he knew or had ever heard of Delaroche had been in connexion with Marie Morel, and as a friend of hers. Of course the habit Delaroche wore, as well as that which he had in those Rouen days worn as a seminarist, put all thought of jealousy out of Alain's head, and his sole thought at the moment was that Delaroche came charged with some message or some word from Marie.

And it would have been difficult to say whether the thought that the priest was the bearer of perhaps some word—some tidings at all events of Marie brought more of pain or pleasure with it to Alain. He had loved Marie Morel with a very genuine love; he loved her still, and had never loved any other. To have been told that the rich marriage with Mademoiselle de Tressinien had all been broken off, and that he was free to throw himself and the lands of Plogarrian at the feet of Marie Morel, would have transformed him from an unhappy to a happy man. But he knew that he had behaved badly to her, and that he was behaving badly to her now. He had done so, and was doing so, because his father was a man of iron will, and he was weak; because to fear the violence of his father, to be led and guided, and to obey implicitly, had been the habit of a lifetime, and he had not the daring and the vigour

to break it. And now what could it be that this old friend of the Morel family was come to say to him on the eve of his marriage? For he did not imagine for an instant that his grandfather's statement to the effect that Delaroche knew nothing of the postponement of the marriage was correct.

Be it what it might that Delaroche had to say to him, it was clear that it would be well that it should be said to himself alone. So asking his grandfather to be kind enough to carry his gun for him to the house, he put his arm through that of the priest, and proposed to him a stroll down to the coast before taking him to the house to introduce him to his father.

The conversation that ensued between them lasted the whole twilight hour of that February day; and it was dark night when they returned, still talking, to the house.

"If, then," said the priest, as they reached the door, "if I bring you your father's full assent to your union with Marie, together with his promise that he will take upon himself the task of breaking off the marriage with Mademoiselle de Tressinien——"

"If—if you can do that, and if Marie can forgive me, not an hour shall elapse before I would hasten to throw myself at her feet. But Monsieur le Curé, you do not know my father. I have small hope that any good will come of your exhortations. Should it be otherwise, I shall be a thankful man indeed, both to God and to you."

The curé's interview with the father was longer than that with the son had been; longer and stormier and more painful. It is needless to detain the reader with any detailed account of the conversation, because he knows already what arms the curé held in his hands, and what was the nature of the arguments he could bring to bear on Gregoire de Kergonnec.

The statement and proposition of the priest may be summed up thus:

"I, Jean" (or Eugène, as it afterwards turned out that he had been baptised after the name of his father)—"I, Eugène de Kergonnec, am the rightful heir and owner of this house and this estate. I hold the means of compelling the restoration of it, unavoidably at the same time making public the means you, my uncle, took to possess yourself of my inheritance. Should I do so, you know well what chance there would be of any marriage between your son, my cousin, and Mademoiselle de Tressinien. Now, as the condition on which I will consent to bury the past in oblivion, to forego all claim to the lands or house of Plogarrian, and to leave my cousin in unmolested possession of the same, I require that the proposed marriage with Mademoiselle de Tressinien should be broken off, leaving you to find whatever pretext for such rupture may seem best to you, and that you should give your full consent to a marriage between your son and Mademoiselle Marie Morel. And I undertake to deliver up to you the paper containing the confession of the man Morvenec on the day that such a marriage shall be solemnised."

Gregoire de Kergonnec was a violent man; and had this proposal been made to him by his nephew, while both of them were standing alone on the rock above the Pointe du Raz, the result would probably have been a different one. But as it was there was nothing for it but to yield. He might, and he did, try storm and violence, and the night was half worn through before the victory was won. But the priest was firm as the rocks at the Pointe du Raz themselves; and Gregoire de Kergonnec had to accept his terms.

The result of his victory, the happiness it insured to Marie — who looked upon Alain's defection with the eyes of a French girl who deems opposition on such a point to the will of a father wholly impossible, and not with those of an English girl—the happiness of her lover, and the true delight that, though it could not yet be all delight, poured a balm into the curé's heart as he listened to the outpouring of Marie's gratitude and the blessings of her father, might all be related pleasantly enough. But it is not necessary to speak of them; cannot every reader imagine them for himself?

Eugène de Kergonnec returned alone, when his cousin's marriage with Marie had been celebrated, to his bleak and lonely parsonage on the storm-beaten coast of the Côtes du Nord, and sought, not eventually without a satisfactory measure of success, tranquillity, and perhaps even as much of happiness as is allotted to most of us, in the faithful and zealous discharge of the arduous and often trying duties which belonged to the station in life to which God had called him.

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THE ROSE AND THE KEY.

CHAPTER XLIV. FACES SEEN BEFORE.

LADY MARDYKES had left the Grange the morning after the Wymering ball, but Miss Medwyn's note followed her; and a few days more brought to Roydon three envelopes, addressed, in her pretty hand, one to each of the three ladies at present at Roydon.

That to Lady Vernon was very polite, though a little formal, and not very long, asking leave for Maud. But that to Maud herself was playful and animated, and extremely good-natured. She named an early day for her visit, and she insisted it should not be a flying one, as there were a great number of people coming to Carsbrook, who would interest and amuse her.

To Maximilla she mentioned some of these foreign ministers, authors, artists, parliamentary celebrities. "I know she would think it amusing, and you must not let her disappoint me. You have never failed me, so I put you down as certain. Don't allow her to leave Carsbrook before she is really tired of it. You know that there are more bedrooms there than I can ever find guests to occupy. Don't, therefore, let her fancy that I shall want her room, and you and she will be glad, I think, to meet where you can do exactly as you please, which, I conjecture, is scarcely the case at Roydon."

"I think I shall be pretty sure to meet a very particular friend of mine at Carsbrook," said Miss Max, after a little silence.

"Who is it?" inquired Maud, misled by her grave simplicity.

"Charles Marston, my dear," she said, lighting up with a smile. "Of course you don't care, but I do."

"I don't think that very likely. I should not wonder if I were never to see him again," said the young lady.

"I should very much," laughed Miss Max.

"I mean he was so vexed at that odious Wymering ball."

"No wonder. But he has had time to cool since then, in one sense only. He will be there, as sure as I am here. You'll see. Put on your things, and come out, and we'll have a comfortable talk, quite to ourselves."

So these two cronies went out together, busy with the future, and already, in imagination, at Carsbrook.

"It is a huge house," said Miss Max. "One of those great black and white houses, with really an infinitude of bedrooms. When I was there last, we mustered sixty people every day to dinner—a noisier place, you see, than Roydon, and yet, I assure you, there were whole galleries perfectly deserted. She told me it would be much more crowded this year. I think, between ourselves, she takes a pride in collecting celebrities. It is her vanity, and certainly it is one of the very most amusing houses I ever was in. Of course one would grow tired of it after a time; at least, an old girl like me would. But for a little time it is quite delightful. She is very rich, you know."

"Indeed!"

"I don't say rich compared with you Roydon people, but she is what seems very rich to me; that is, her jointure is five thousand a year, and she has more than fifteen thousand a year that belonged to her mother, the first Lady Warhampton; so she has more than twenty thousand a year."

"Well, tell me more about Carsbrook," said Maud.

"We used to pass our time so agreeably, when we were not going out driving, or picnicking, or sight-seeing. There is a great, square flower-garden, with old-fashioned, trim hedges all round, and such quantities of pretty flowers, in the old Dutch style. As you look down on them from the terrace they seem like the pattern of a thick piled carpet. This is like a border all round, for the centre is kept in grass as smooth as velvet. And there is a very old mulberry-tree, with so many curious stories about it, in the centre. And ever so many parties used to play croquet or lawn billiards. It was such fun. And there were so many amusing affairs of the heart to interest old people like me. Such a comedy perpetually going on. You can't think what a charming house it is to stay at."

"I'm very glad we are going," said Maud.

"But you don't look very glad, my dear."

"Well, I suppose I am discontented a little. I was just thinking what a pity it is mamma keeps such a dull house here."

"So it is. I have often told her so," said Miss Max. "She could do, you know, whatever she liked. I don't think, indeed, she could get together so many remarkable people, but that kind of thing may be a little overdone, and, certainly, once or twice when I was there, there were some very absurd people at Carsbrook; but, taken for all in all, it is one of the most delightful houses in the world."

Full of these pleasant anticipations, which, to a girl who had never seen a London season, had something even exciting in them, and in the certainty of a very early meeting with Maximilla Medwyn, Maud bore the hour of separation much more cheerfully than she otherwise would.

That hour had now arrived, and Miss Max, having bid Lady Vernon good-bye, and taken many leaves of Maud, drove away at last, with maid and boxes, down the old avenue of Roydon.

It was three o'clock when she set out, having a ten miles' drive before reaching the train she was to catch.

It was about six o'clock, when the train in which she was now gliding toward her destination, stopped at the Drongwell station.

Here some of her fellow-passengers got out, and a gentleman with a small leather bag, a slender silk umbrella, and a rug, stepped nearly in, but arrested his foot at the door, and would probably have receded had it not been that he was followed a little too closely by another person, who, with a despatch-box in his hand, had scaled the steps.

Miss Max saw his momentary hesitation, and a little maliciously said:

"How d'ye do?" with a nod and smile of recognition.

Doctor Malkin, for he it was, smiling his best, and squinting viciously, with a surprised and glad recognition, returned her salutation, and took his place beside her. His companion took his seat at the opposite side, in the corner next the window, placed his despatch-box on the seat beside him, and unlocked it.

There was no mistaking the marble features, strange eyes, and coal-black square beard. The gentleman with the despatch-box, who now leaned across, and murmured low a word or two in Doctor Malkin's ear, was that Antomarchi, whose appearance had so strongly excited Miss Maximilla Medwyn's curiosity at the Wymering ball.

The clapping of the doors was over now, the whistle skirled its horrid blast, the engine communicated its first jerk through all the articulations of the snake-like train, and the carriages were again gliding forward.

Doctor Malkin for a few minutes was busy stowing away his bag and umbrella, and having rid his mind of these cares, he smiled again, turning to Miss Max, and observed on the beauty of the weather and scenery.

"How soon we glide from summer into autumn," he observed. "The change of the leaf does not remind us so powerfully of our approach to winter, as the perceptible shortening of the days."

"It is so long since I glided into autumn myself, that these changes in nature don't trouble me much," answered Miss Max, gaily. "Certainly, the days are shortening, and so are mine, but that does not vex me either. There are younger people—for instance, Lady Vernon, I think her looking by no means well. I can't define what it is; she looks hectic, and odd, as if there were something decidedly wrong. She told me one day, when I remarked that she was not looking well, that she had a little palpitation, and she seemed almost vexed that she had mentioned it."

"Yes, there is a little; the action of the heart is a little eccentric," said Doctor Malkin. "Of course we must not mention

it; people are so stupid, it would be sure to come back to her, and the fact of its being talked of would only make her worse."

"You know I'm a homœopathist, but that's of no importance. What I want to know is, does she suffer under any actual disease of the heart?"

"Why, as to the heart, it is very hard to say," observed the doctor a little evasively; "because a man might pass the severest examination of the ablest physicians in England, and having been pronounced perfectly sound, might drop down dead as he quitted the room where the consultation was held. But there is no evidence of organic complaint in Lady Vernon's case, and I'll tell you frankly, if there were, I should not admit it; I am a great stickler for keeping faith with a patient. No one likes their ailments or infirmities to be disclosed; but of course," he added, thinking he had been a little brusque, "to so very near a friend and relation as you, Miss Medwyn, it would be different. The truth is, however, just as I have told you."

Miss Max sat quite far enough away to mention Doctor Antomarchi, the noise of the train allowed for, without danger of his overhearing what she said.

"I was going to say, I think Doctor Antomarchi a rather interesting man, and I should, I think, like to make his acquaintance."

"Well, I don't know that you would like him. He thinks of nothing but his science, his art; and to a listener not éclairée, I fear it must be more dull than entertaining."

"He seemed to have a great deal to say for himself at Wymering, to Lady Mardykes, the other evening," said Miss Max.

"I did not remark. But the truth is, I have scarcely made his acquaintance myself," observed Doctor Malkin, smiling. "I found him on the platform, and he followed me in here."

"How far does he go?"

"I don't know. I've to get out at Wakesworth."

"Wakesworth? That is not a great many miles away from Lady Mardykes'. You know Carsbrook, of course?" says Miss Max. "It is such a broken, roundabout journey by rail, however. From Roydon it is more comfortably reached by the high road. What a huge old house it is," she continued, breaking again into the description of it she had given to Maud a few days before; "black and white, you know, and the great, old, square flower-garden, with the clipped hedges round it, and the croquet-ground in the centre, and the old mulberry-tree."

As Miss Max concluded the description she thought she saw a listening smile of secret intelligence on the still face of Antomarchi, who was busy noting the papers he took from his box, and did not raise his eyes.

Her curiosity was piqued.

Did Doctor Malkin know more about this Antomarchi than he pretended? Were their routes really as disconnected as the Roydon doctor would have her believe? Had their journey anything to do with Lady Mardykes and Carsbrook?

These inquiries must rest unspoken for the present. She leaned back, and was silent for a time, with her eyes all but closed.

"I'm sure it is a fine place," resumed Doctor Malkin; "but I've never seen it, and I don't know Lady Mardykes. I hear she is perfectly charming."

"So she is, and extremely clever. Her poor mother was; and her father is. You know Lord Warhampton?"

"Yes, by fame, of course. Very able man. I've had to come here all the way about a patient," he added, as if to quiet further conjectures.

The sun was at the edge of the horizon. It would, after two or three golden glorious minutes, be grey twilight.

Miss Max opened her eyes, and those of Antomarchi met, or rather seemed to hold, hers with a sensation the most unpleasant and overpowering she had ever experienced.

His eyes almost immediately looked another way, and were bent again upon his papers.

Twilight came. He then locked up his despatch-box, and looked out of the window.

"Is not your friend, Mr. Antomarchi, something of a mesmerist?" inquired Miss Max.

"He is; a very potent one; at least, he is so reputed. I have never seen him exercise his faculty," answered Doctor Malkin.

A few minutes more passed, and the train, with a long whistle, came to a standstill at the platform of Wakesworth station.

Doctor Antomarchi stood up, with his despatch-box in his hand, and signed to the porter to open the door.

Miss Max was glad, somehow, that he was gone, and took leave of Doctor Malkin,

who was also going, without much reluctance.

She watched their movements slyly from the window, close to which she had moved. But there was to-ing and fro-ing on the platform, and the steam from the engine had eddied in, and was confusing objects, and it was already nearly dark. She thought, however, that the two gentlemen went up the steep road from the station, side by side.

In another minute the train was moving away, and she had left Wakesworth and the two doctors far behind.

Those two doctors did walk up, side by side, into the little town, and entered the White Lion, and, while they were eating a hasty cold dinner, horses were put to a carriage, which stood ready at the door so soon as the gentlemen emerged.

Some of the people who were at the door looked darkly at Doctor Malkin, and whispered to one another, as, aided by the lamp over the inn-door, and by the faint silvery beams of the moon, which by this time was showing her light, they saw him get in and take his seat.

The doctors smiled amusedly on each other as the carriage rolled away through the quiet street of Wakesworth, and lighting their cigars, they smoked as they drove up the narrow road, over the hedges of which hung the dewy boughs and fruit of orchards in the moonlight.

CHAPTER XLV. THE JOURNEY'S END.

For nearly three miles they drove in silence, each too comfortable to disturb the serenity of his ruminations.

There is a soothing influence in the subsidence of colour and the indistinctness of outline that surround one in a drive through a wooded country, when the thin mists arise by moonlight; and this seemed to prevail with the spirit of each gentleman, as he looked listlessly from his window.

Doctor Malkin broke the silence first.

"What asses young fellows are!" he declaimed. "I had an uncle the head of a great legal firm, and two first cousins solicitors, and they, one and all, wished me to go to the bar. I might have been making four thousand a year easily by this time. I might have been on the high road to the bench. Every one said I had a turn for it. But, like a fool, I took a fancy to be a doctor—and even so, I might have stayed in London. If I had—it was on the cards—I might have done some good. I know something about my business, I believe. And much good has it done me! What's the good of a fellow's making a slave of himself, if he doesn't put by something worth while. Better to enjoy what he has."

"Regretting is the greatest waste of time except wishing," said Antomarchi, in his cold, resonant bass tones.

"I have not much, very little: but liberty is something," said Doctor Malkin.

"Life without progress is death," insisted the same marble oracle, with something of scorn ringing in his deep voice.

"Think what Paris is, or Vienna, and think, then, of being stuck in such a cursed little hole as Roydon," said Doctor Malkin, with disgust.

"Your liberty and your vices are not resources enough for a life. A man of any mind must have a game of some sort to play at," observed Antomarchi.

"You may langh. I don't say you are not a man of merit; I think you about the ablest man I ever met," said the Roydon doctor; "but you have found a short cut to fortune."

"You must count on a good deal of mud before you turn up a nugget," said the man with the square beard, and yawned. "I was on my way to London this morning," Doctor Antomarchi suddenly resumed; "I am not the first man who has so changed his purpose. A lady's billet has brought me back. Try one of these."

And so saying, he tendered his cigars.

"Thanks. I tell you, at a single jump you have reached a fortune," said Doctor Malkin. "I wish I could woo the goddess as successfully."

"Have you never tried the language of the eyes?" said Antomarchi.

"In ten years' time you'll be a baronet. You know how to rule men, and before fifteen more are passed you will have got a peerage. Of course, I assume that your energies will be directed to get it."

"And I will take for my crest, what device?" said Antomarchi. "Let me see. Just that," he said, nodding his head toward the resplendent moon. "A full moon argent, on a field azure, and three rasors proper."

They were now approaching a village, with the tower of a country church shining silver white among dark trees and glimmering roofs.

Antomarchi's resonant voice brought the driver to a halt.

"We get out here," he cried, sternly. "Drive on to the gate-house, and give the man these things, and he will pay you."

"All right, sir," replied the driver, and the carriage rolled away toward the village.

They were now standing on the white road, dappled by the intense shadow of a motionless tree, under the brilliant moon. Skirting the road at the left hand ran a high park wall, here and there clustered with ivy, and overtopped with high old trees.

A narrow, arched door in this opened to Antomarchi's latch-key, and he and his companion entered, to find themselves on a narrow park road, from which, however, their path in a very little way diverged.

The grounds were studded with clumps of fine timber. The two doctors walked up a gentle, undulating slope, and when this was surmounted, close before them, on the low ground, stood a huge black and white house, its white showing, in the moon-beams, in dazzling contrast with the oak-beams that crossed it perpendicularly, horizontally, diagonally. They stood just overlooking a great, square, Dutch flower-garden, which interposed between them and the house, surrounded by tall, trim hedges, in the bygone Dutch taste. The flowers made a wide border in fantastic patterns all round, the centre was laid out in grass, and in the middle of this wide, green carpet stood a lonely old mulberry-tree.

In a long line of windows on the second story a ruddy light glowed out hospitably, as well as here and there from other windows above, and in the lower story.

They stopped for a minute without premeditation. The scene was so pretty, the contrast between the lights in the house and the cold, silver brightness of the moon-beams so striking, and the character of the whole so festive and hospitable, that each silently enjoyed the picture.

"There is a ball to-night," said Antomarchi, "but we need not appear at it. Come."

And he led the way toward the house. They soon reached a path, and under the wide shadow of tall trees, arrived at a door, like that which they had already passed, in the wall that begirt the garden.

The latch-key again opened this, and they entered the silent alleys of lofty clipped hedges, tall and straight as prison walls, making a profound shadow. They passed under the first arch of the many that pierced these thick curtains of foliage, and so found themselves, after passing the broad border of flower-beds, upon the shorn grass, in the broad light of the moon, among the croquet hoops, that in this cloudless weather make their bivouac all night on the ground they have taken up by day.

It was, as I have said, a great black and white house, and, as they approached, its walls and windows seemed to expand, and the whole building to grow almost gigantic.

The latch-key of the privileged Doctor Antomarchi did here for Doctor Malkin the office which the feather from the cock's tail did for Micyllus, and all doors opened before it.

Ascending two steps he opened a door in the wall, and led the way into the house.

They were in a long, dimly-lighted passage, that seemed to go right through the house, with doors on each side opening from it. Up this Antomarchi walked quickly, his hat still on, as confidently as if he were master of all about him.

Another passage, longer still, crossed this at right-angles, dimly lighted, like the first. A footman in livery was walking along it quickly. Antomarchi signed to him, and he approached.

"Mr. Drummond in his room?" he asked.

"Yes, sir."

"You won't mind coming a few steps this way?" he said, taking Doctor Malkin's acquiescence for granted.

He walked down the transverse passage to the left, where, more than half-way on, a folding screen blocked nearly half the width of the corridor, protecting a door at the left from the draughts that sometimes eddied up the passage. At this door Antomarchi knocked.

"Mr. Drummond?"

Mr. Drummond, a serious, quiet man, with rosy cheeks, a little stout, and dressed in black, who had just been reading his paper and drinking his tea, appeared, swallowing down a bit of bread-and-butter which he was munching at the moment.

"Her ladyship arrived this morning?" inquired Antomarchi.

"Yes, sir," said Drummond, waiting just a second, to be certain that he had quite swallowed his bit of bread-and-butter.

"She's at the ball, of course?"

"Yes, sir."

"She was satisfied with the preparations in her rooms?"

"Quite, sir; and she placed some papers in my hands, by-the-bye, sir, which she said were the title-deeds of Mardykes Hall."

"Very good; place them under lock and key in the long press, under the proper letter. She may call for them; and if so,

let her have them immediately. She must not be vexed. You understand?"

"Yes, sir, perfectly."

Antomarchi nodded, and, turning on his heel, led the way at a swift pace. They passed a staircase, and then reached another, the grand staircase, and a great hall, in which were many footmen in livery, and some female servants peeping in at an open door, from which issued the sounds of music and dancing, and laughter and talking.

"Peep in, if you like. They won't mind you."

He did, and—

Wow! Tam saw an unco sight.

The Wymering ball was dulness itself compared with this. There was such variety of character in the guests, and in their dancing. Some so stately, grave, and ceremonious; others so hilarious; some working with hearty, but rather grave, goodwill; others wild with glee—all so animated and amusing, that Doctor Malkin could have kept his post at the door I know not for how long.

"There is a tall, dark man, with long hair, rather handsome; he looks about forty. He smiles haughtily round, and stands with his arms folded—a remarkable-looking fellow."

"Does he wear steel buckles in his shoes?" asked Antomarchi.

"Yes, by Jove! and point-lace to his white neck-tie."

"That is his excellency the Spanish minister," continued Antomarchi.

"Oh!" said Doctor Malkin. "And there's a fellow, almost a dwarf, with straw-coloured hair, and a long, solemn face, with a sharp chin. He is close to the door here, and he has a set of ivory tablets in one hand and a pencil in the other. He must be a queer fellow."

"Queer fellow! You may well say so. He is the greatest mathematician, astronomer, and mechanic on earth. He has lately discovered, among other things, an instrument by which you may see the reverse side of the moon, and, oh, look there; do you see that lady, in purple satin, sitting on the sofa near the window?" said Antomarchi, peeping cautiously over Doctor Malkin's shoulder. "I don't think you'll recognise her, do you?"

"No, I don't think I do. Ought I to know who she is?"

"I think so. That's Lady Mardykes. But come, or they'll see me. I will conduct you to your room. Come," said Antomarchi.

They crossed the great hall, ascended a broad oak staircase, and then marched half the length of a long gallery. Their progress was arrested by a ponderous door, which appeared to be sheathed with iron. This opened, they passed in. It closed with a spring lock.

"Here we are private. This is your room; only two doors from mine." Antomarchi pointed with his open hand towards his own. He opened the door, and led the way into a large and very comfortable room.

Doctor Malkin looked round on the curtained bed and windows, and the handsome furniture, with a feeling of rather angry envy.

"You are lucky," he said. "How well housed you are."

"Patience, and shuffle the cards," the other answered. "Lady Vernon, I'm told, has some pretty things in her gift. You will be rich yet, if you are not in too great haste to marry."

"Would you mind considering this case where we are, we are so quiet here?" said Doctor Malkin, again looking round.

"Here, there, where you please; all one to me, provided we are not interrupted," replied Antomarchi. "Will you have your supper before or after?"

"When we have done, please," he replied. "I should like it here, if it doesn't upset arrangements. A broiled bone and a glass of sherry."

They entered on their business, and talked for some time, Antomarchi being chiefly a listener, but now and then putting a short, sharp question, and keeping the more discursive man very rigidly to the point.

Under the control of such a conductor, the discussion did not last very long.

And now it was over, and the point settled, and both gentlemen stood up, and Doctor Malkin, while his broiled bones were coming, looked round the room again.

Over the chimney hung a rather remarkable portrait; it was that of a handsome, but forbidding woman, in a nun's dress. The face expressed resolution, contempt, and cruelty, with a strange power; but it was death-like.

Under this picture hung a crooked Malayan dagger.

"That kreese was my father's," said Antomarchi. "He killed a renegade priest with it in a row in Egypt. So it has made its mark."

"Ha!" exclaimed Doctor Malkin, softly, as, smiling with increased interest, he handled its heft, and tried its point with his finger tip. "Very sharp, too."

"It has some magical characters engraved there," observed Antomarchi. "It is in keeping with the portrait; it looks as if it had slipped out of that sinister virago's pocket."

Doctor Malkin looked round, but there was nothing else by way of decoration in the room that interested him.

And now he had his supper, and Antomarchi, who wished to look in at the ball, took his leave, and went to make a rapid toilet.

His tray and sherry gone, Doctor Malkin prepared for bed.

The moon was high, but as yet her beams only entered the window obliquely. He drew the curtains, freely to admit the air. Partly in consequence of being in a strange house, and partly from other causes, he felt perhaps just a little nervous. He looked in the two presses, and other possible hiding-places in the room, to satisfy himself that there was no lurking intruder there. Then he secured his door, and, lastly, he made his prayerless preparations for bed, extinguished his candle, and was soon comfortably extended with his head on the pillow. He thought of the ball he had stolen a glimpse at to-night, and then of the Wymering ball, and the image of Lady Mardykes talking with so much pain and earnestness to Antomarchi, came before him. Lucky rascal, Antomarchi! And, finally, he was overcome by drowsiness, and slept soundly.

There are abnormal states in which the partners, the spirit and the animal, that jointly constitute man, are oddly divorced. The body will lie with eyes closed in deep slumber. The spirit will sit up with its interior vision and hearing opened, and see and hear things of which, in other states, it is not permitted a perception.

Here was Doctor Malkin, with his watch under his pillow and his head upon it, snoring, as was his wont, moderately but regularly.

But the doctor had eaten supper, which was not a habit of his, and seldom agreed with him; and the spirit, finding its tenement hot and uncomfortable, I suppose, slipped out of it, and sat up in the bed and looked about it.

It saw the "still life" of the room accurately. The bed-curtains drawn back to the posts, the window-curtains to the frame at either side. The moon by this time was full in front of the broad window, and shone with an intense lustre into the old-fashioned room, right before the foot of the bed.

Doctor Malkin supposed nothing but that he was wide awake. He was looking about him, as I said, and, turning his eyes toward the fireplace at his left, he wondered what had become of the long Malayan knife with its crooked blade, that had hung under the portrait over the chimney-piece. He raised his eyes to the repulsive monastic portrait; but he could not see it! Had it melted into shadow?

The canvas seemed to present one surface of black. Perhaps the moonlight had dazzled his newly awakened eyes a little. He shaded them with his hand, but still the frame presented nothing but a black canvas. All the odder his dulness of vision seemed, that the dress of this mother-abbess was in great measure white. While he was looking, a voice at his right whispered: "Ha! Tempter, my child!"

Looking round instantly, he saw standing close to the bedside the figure of the portrait, but not the features. The face was that of Lady Vernon, white, gleaming, and quivering with fury, and the knife was in her hand. He sprang on the floor at the other side of the bed, and the phantom was gone. Over the chimney-piece the kreese was glimmering undisturbed, and the lady abbess was scowling down from her frame with a grim smile.

Doctor Malkin went to the window and looked out. The flower-garden lay beneath.

He could see the arabesque pattern of the beds, in which the flowers were now closed and drooping. He could see in the broad grass-plat in the midst, which looked bright silver-grey all over, the faint lines of the croquet hoops, and at the other side the sharp black shadows of the tall, trim hedge, and the bush-like mulberry-tree in the centre, with its blotch of shadow on the grass.

He had never had a fright of this kind since his nursery years, and he was very nervous.

The unaccustomed view failed to reassure him. He lighted his candles again, and then one of his cigars, and smoked diligently from the open window, thinking of Lady Vernon, and assuring himself that never was vision more preposterous. He smoked on, looking out of the window, doing his best to obliterate the uncomfortable impression of his visitation or his nightmare. But he could not.

It answered uncomfortably to a latent horror of his conscience, which yet he boldly seized, examined, and pronounced upon most satisfactorily whenever it tormented him sufficiently. He did nothing he was afraid of, he shrank from no scrutiny; not he.

At last he lay down again, with candles burning still on his table, and, after a long and uncomfortable waking interval, he fell asleep, and the moment he awoke again in the morning, his thoughts were once more five-and-forty miles away at Roydon Hall.

He felt nervous and ill, and, despise it as he might, his vision worried him.

A DAY AT BOMBAY.

The Byculla Club, Bombay, is a delightful resting-place. A handsome mansion standing in its own grounds, with billiard-rooms, coffee-room, library, stuffed lounging-chairs, sofas, hall-porter, list of members, files of English newspapers and magazines, a bill of fare for the day's dinner, and a copious and well-selected wine-list; a luncheon in a lofty morning room, abutting on a trimly kept and spacious garden, windows open to the ground, and sparrows hopping in from the balcony, to peck impudently at my bread-and-cheese; a table d'hôte dinner at a round table, where every man was English, and where the courses were excellent after their kind; claret-cup, pale ale, and iced effervescent drinks; whist parties, smoking, and chit-chat; barouches, cabriolets, and buggies dropping, and calling for, members during the evening, in a fashion wonderfully suggestive of Pall Mall; a search through the journals, and a rapid posting up of oneself in the English news of the last few months —such is one series of pictures arising naturally out of my first day in Bombay.

At the club dinner, and before the cheese is removed, one of my fellow-diners calls, as I think, "Shallaballah;" whereupon a native attired in a different uniform to the other attendants (of whom there seem to be two to every person dining) replies "Sahib!" reverentially, as if it were a response in church, and brings forward one of the stiff stage-banners of theatrical processions, and fixes the bottom of the flag-staff holding it into a wooden stand like a practicable boot-jack. I am immensely puzzled as to what he will do next. There is a gravity, not to say solemnity, about this native's handsome, swarthy, melancholy face; his stiff red turban ornamented with gold, his black robes, and the manifold layers of red cord round his waist, give him such a sacerdotal look, that I more than half expect to see an interesting Hindoo religious ceremony performed. Why not? There would have been nothing incongruous about it, compared with many other things I had seen during my travels. I had met an Englishman of good family who professed himself a follower of Islam. I had been among Mussulmans, shieks, and Arab chiefs, who would not allow food, water, or even a whiff of tobacco to pass their lips between sunrise and sun-down, because we were in the holy season of Ramazan. I had been compelled to doff my boots and trudge about in my stockings, or at best in slippers borrowed from the Faithful, when within the precincts of a mosque. I had been warned gravely not to ride my donkey as swiftly as usual through the crowded bazaars of Cairo, because if the little animal shouldered any of the Egyptian strollers, they would assuredly fall down and not be able to rise again, so weakened were they by their protracted fast. I had seen men engaged in animated conversation, transacting business, driving bargains, and receiving orders, suddenly "flop" down, and after touching the ground several times with their foreheads, rise quite composedly and resume their conversation as if it had never been broken off. I had "assisted" at religious demonstrations, which included riding over prostrate human bodies, piercing naked people with swords and knives, eating live serpents, and twirling round and round on one foot like a self-acting teetotum, until the operators staggered off giddy and unwell. I had mixed with holy men whose piety consisted in tossing their heads backwards and forwards, uttering at the same time unearthly howls, and I had seen religious processions in which the cow's horn furnished forth discordant melody, and in which little children, gaudily dressed and decorated, were escorted through the public streets with every circumstance of pomp. What more likely than that I was about to acquire one novel experience the more, and that the English diner who threw himself back in his chair as if he were going to be shaved, and the handsomely dressed native who stood motionless at his elbow, with one hand clasping the flag-staff, and the other motionless at his side, as if posed for his portrait as a standard-bearer, were about to join in some Anglo-

Hindoo rite, wherein insular prejudice and native sentiment should be both studied? I had lost the faculty of astonishment long ago, and as I was now in a new country, with everything to learn, I waited with eyes fixed on the curious pair as calmly as if I knew to a nicety what was coming. The suspense was soon over, and my highly-wrought anticipations were a little dashed, when all this elaborate preparation ended in the white gentleman being fanned. He had called "Punkah wallah!" just as you call "Waiter" at a London club, and the vocation of the dignified native in black and red, whom I had taken for a priest or a chieftain, was to wave the stiff banner to and fro in its socket so as to produce an artificial current of air while the replete diner nodded and slept. It was a pretty and instructive sight, but though I saw it repeated later, it never had quite the thrilling effect of this first experience. The uncontrollable exposition of sleep which Bottom the Weaver felt come over him, appears to be a weakness with some Anglo-Indians, who are vivacity and cuteness incarnate at other times than those devoted to their "forty winks." Thus at club or private dinner-party, in the midst of conversation, in the presence of ladies, and when the hilarity and bustle of a banquet are at their height, a pair of eyes may be observed to close, a head to droop languidly forward, and a face to lose its expression as their owner sinks, with chin on breast, into oblivion of all around. This does not seem to be thought rude. The weakness is recognised as part of the sleeper, and no one thinks the worse of him. It is the climate, or his liver, or his hard mental work, or all three combined, and "Mr. Suasive must have his nap after dinner," is said as naturally of a guest or host as if it were "he's been ordered horse exercise." I had the pleasure of seeing the same gentlemen asleep at table in public and private more than once, and found that the habit formed a kind of label to recognise them by, and that when there were two of the same name in the station, the "Mr. Duplicate who goes to sleep," was always the most widely known.

This first meal in India impressed me, also, with the flat contradiction it gave to old-established theories, respecting the appearance and health of Anglo-Indian residents. I looked round the table at which I sat, and from it to the other tables about the club-room, and saw a succession of stalwart figures and ruddy faces which would have done honour to a sanatorium. The dried-up frames, the yellow skins, the shrivelled looks, which fiction and the drama have given to the Anglo-Indian, are as false or as obsolete as the old-fashioned nabobs "with bad livers and worse hearts," and as, I fear, is the pleasant exercise of shaking the pagoda-tree. With the exception of one gentleman who wears a white linen lounging jacket, everybody was dressed precisely as they would be in a London club. The cloth out of which the garments are manufactured may have been somewhat thinner here than would be employed for suits to be worn in England; but there was nothing to denote this to the observer, and in cut, colour, and fashion the attire of the club-loungers of London and Bombay is identical. As for a hookah after dinner, you might as well have looked for a Suttee. There was not even a run upon cheroots. Meerschaum pipes, cigars, and cigarettes were carried into the card and billiard-rooms, and save for the general friendship and cohesive intimacy which prevailed among its members, the Byculla Club might have been in Pall Mall instead of Bombay.

Before turning in there to take up my membership, and to pay the moderate subscription, which was one of the most remunerative investments I made in India, I had to make divers small purchases for my travels, besides presenting my letters, and arranging where and how I could be communicated with by telegraph. This gave me glimpses of the representative Anglo-Indian city, and crude, rough-and-ready impressions of its inhabitants, which I shall never forget. Progress and prosperity seemed written in all directions. I saw, everywhere, new streets, places, squares, circles, esplanades, market-houses, all possessing the merits we are accustomed to look for in great capitals. In magnificent edifices of stone, six or seven stories high, I bought cheroots and tooth-brushes, suits of flannel for sleeping in at night, and some simple medicines and eau-de-cologne, from shopmen who would have done honour to Bond-street. At Malabar Point, the handsome villa-bungalows of the wealthy English merchants, the well-cultivated gardens stocked with tropical plants, the gorgeous hues of the scarlet-leaved Cape-plant lighting up houses and walls; the Hindoo temples, and the natives lying and sitting round the fœtid tanks; the mansions and pleasure-grounds of the wealthy Parsees; and the ghastly Tower of Silence, with the obscene

vultures, perched, gorged and torpid, on its walls—all told one how much there was to learn. The villas and grounds of the Parsees, by-the-bye, as seen during this bird's-eye view, reminded me of the gardens of North Woolwich or Cremorne. There is the same profusion of gaudy decorations as in those places of public entertainment; the same superabundance of lamps, the same incongruity in the disposition of statuary and pictures, the same odd mixture of semi-theatrical scenery with skilful landscape gardening. The suburban villa of a wealthy Parsee looks as if it were waiting to be lit up at night; and at weddings, or other great evening festivals, when its "thousands of additional lamps" are called into play, and enormous assemblies are held, the public-garden simile has still greater force. Verandahs glazed and shut in, so as to make their owners dwell literally in glass houses, are common. The oleaginous look of the Parsees we met, seated in their carriages, gave an unpleasant significance to the gorged vultures on the walls of the Tower of Silence. The latter is the Parsee receptacle for the dead, and within it the bodies are exposed on iron gratings, until picked clean by birds of prey. Hearing of this custom, and meeting obese Parsees at every turn, it seemed as if they were being fattened for eating, a horribly grotesque idea, but one which would obtrude itself whenever I saw a stout Parsee.

There was so much to see during my first drive, that I found it hard to classify and record my impressions when I sat down to my diary at night. Let me recal some of the strange magic-lantern figures and scenes of this odd experience.

Fierce-looking, armed Sikhs on horseback, in uniforms of red and black, and belonging to a corps of irregular native cavalry stationed here, are passed and met. Sepoy policemen in coatees and trousers of bright blue, trimmed with yellow braid, and with huge yellow turbans to match, give a respectful salute to every English passer-by. Hindoo lamplighters, who perform their work as similar functionaries do in London, are wending their way homewards in parties of two or three, looking in their white robes and crimson head-dresses, as they carry off the long poles of their extinguished torches, like native lancers on skirmishing duty; Jack on leave from some of the ships of war now lying in the harbour, and making for the Ratcliffe Highway of Bombay; the English gentleman taking his evening ride in Rotten Row costume, including the conventional "chimney-pot" for a head-dress; elegantly dressed, delicately nurtured infants on ponies, led by one native manservant while another walks at their side—all these were interesting types. One seemed to read a melancholy story in the faces of the pretty children. They were taken to where the most healthy breezes could be obtained, and the infants we saw, though with complexions so exquisitely delicate as to resemble fine porcelain, seemed hearty and happy. But they were very young, and one felt that their little lives would be one continued fight against climate, aided by the appliances wealth can procure, but that, sooner or later, but inevitably, the doctor would issue his fiat, and they would be sent to distant England, never perhaps to know their parents again. This is, of course, a gloomy view; but the separation of families is the real blight on Anglo-Indian life, and is felt more acutely than any other drawback pertaining to it.

When our carriage crosses the populous thoroughfares of the native town, we see a troubled stream of red and pure white, from the turbans and robes of the dense mobs moving there. The crowding is tremendous, and every inch of pavement and roadway seems covered. The various trades are sorted together in separate streets of bazaars, as at Cairo; the copper-smiths and metal-workers reminding one of the Arabian Nights as well of as the Egyptian capital. The merchants are squatting in the open window recesses which form their shops; and the elaborate carving of the porticoes and pilasters of the gaudily painted native residences; the innumerable hanging-lamps seen through the lofty first-floor windows; the lighted shrines of the doll-gods, some of which are bitterly humiliating in their similitude to the tawdry effigies shown at the Chapel of the Flagellation at Jerusalem; the ornate Hindoo temples of a bright red, and as if modelled out of sealing-wax; the municipal carts with staring white numbers on their backs, conveying the city's sewage beyond the city's purlieus; the yellow omnibuses like those familiar to us in London, only with dark-skinned conductors and drivers, arrayed in scarlet robes and the inevitable turban, all tell their own story. Pushing through the crowd, too, are postmen attired like these last; nautch-girls bedizened with tawdry ornaments; and Persian horse-dealers in worked caps and embroidered velvet pinafores and trousers, on their way

to the great depository for Arab steeds. Again, the street monuments to departed official and military worthies, the elaborate memorial lamp at the cross-roads between the Byculla Club and hotel, erected to a benevolent Parsee, and inscribed with the unexceptionable motto in English, "Trust in God and be not daunted;" the multitude of handsome and substantial stone buildings in course of progress; the small compact figures of the native women, and the large metal rings through their noses and round their ankles; the smeared faces of the more than half-nude brown men, whose nakedness you scarcely notice, and whose face-streak of white or red paint bespeaks their caste—all speak of the peculiar social anomalies of India. As you ponder on these things you meet hideous buffaloes, black and hairless, harnessed in carts; well-appointed equipages with aristocratic English figures reclining in them; hack-buggies with large openings behind, really for air, but looking as if they were made to be jumped through by harlequin at Christmas time; clerks, warehousemen, and merchants steadily pursuing their business about the Fort, and you become gradually aware of combinations which differ from anything to be met with elsewhere. The Manchester cotton-trade and Macaulay's Essays on Warren Hastings and Lord Clive; the City of London and the faith of Mahomet; Hyde Park in the season and the fire-worshipper in Lalla Rookh; the wharves of Liverpool with begums, rajahs, and Brahmins for loungers; Tattersall's and sacred cows; the Church of England and "our heathen brother," who seems to have stepped bodily from the frontispiece of a religious tract—are amalgamated in the strangest way. A first day in India stands out quite distinctly from the rest of the time spent there, from the enormous variety of new impressions it leaves; and when, thirty hours after I had landed, I started on my tour over the country, it seemed as if several years had elapsed since I saw Egypt and Palestine, and as if British domination were the natural condition of Eastern lands.

A SONG FOR MUSIC.

THE OLD STORY.

My love is like the damask rose
That blushes on her breast,
Her breath is like the wind that blows
Balm-laden from the west.
Her smiles are like the sunlight shed
On wavelets as they roll,
And like the blue sky overhead
Her purity of soul.

Her gentle thoughts are like the rain
That falls on high and low,
Her kindly deeds like golden grain
When garners overflow;
But ah! she shines so fair and far,
She thinks of me no more
Than midnight moon, or polar star
Of ripples on the shore.

Arouse mine heart, proclaim thy love!
And if thou canst not fly,
To her who shines so far above
In coldest upper sky,
She may, when all thy truth is known
As truth must ever be,
Take pity from her starry throne
And come to earth—and thee.

RACKSTRAW'S CLIENT.

IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

Upon one of the grimy, greasy door-posts of a house in Yew Tree-court, Inner Temple, the curious investigator might not long since have discerned the inscription, "Mr. James Rackstraw:" one among a long array of names more or less known to fame. Mounting the dark, creaking, dirty staircase, the persistent adventurer might further have found the same name, "Mr. James Rackstraw," traced in whity-brown letters upon a black ground, over a bruised and blistered door, upon the topmost floor of the house. And examination of the Law List, supposing it to have been worth anyone's while to study that directory in relation to so small a matter, would have shown in addition that Mr. James Rackstraw had been called to the bar by the Society of the Inner Temple a good many years ago, that he described himself as a special pleader, that he went the Midland Circuit, and attended the Coventry, Birmingham, and Leicester Sessions.

I am so far entitled to draw attention thus particularly to Mr. James Rackstraw, in that I myself happen to be that person. It was my name that appeared on the door-post, over the battered door, and in the official register of legal functionaries. I inhabited most dreary and squalid chambers at the top of the house in Yew Tree-court; my windows looking chiefly on to a rough sea of red-tiled roofs, which bore aloft vast fleets of chimney-stacks. It was a depressing prospect: sooty, smoky, foggy, detestable.

I was wretchedly poor. I had exhausted, or almost exhausted, such small private fortune—but fortune is too absurd a word to employ under the circumstances—let me rather say pittance, as I had ever possessed. I was in debt, and I was earning nothing, literally nothing.

A large sum of money had been invested,

of course, in my education, and I was a member of what is called a liberal profession, though I fail to see the justice of that designation. It was decidedly an expensive profession. I paid, at any rate I was charged, an exorbitant rent for my miserable garrets in Yew Tree-court. I had to appear dressed as a gentleman, or as nearly so as I could possibly contrive, to affect as much as might be a professional aspect and demeanour; for I clung to my calling desperately. It seemed to me my only chance. I was too old to begin the world anew, and I had sacrificed and suffered so much for the sake of my status as a barrister, that I could not bear to think, I could not bring myself to believe, that all had been, and would prove to be, in vain. So, although sometimes I found myself coveting the ready money earned by a copying clerk, or even the coppers received by a crossing-sweeper, I still posed myself as a member of the bar, and assumed an air of dignity and respectability, curiously out of keeping with the real grim truth of my situation. I lived on, somehow. I persuaded myself that the luck must eventually turn. My difficulty was the finding money to carry on the game with. I could not yet, even to myself, acknowledge exhaustion of my resources and complete failure of all my hopes. So I still went on circuit; although the expense of that proceeding, considered in relation to the profit it produced, was absolutely ruinous. But if I once omitted to appear with my fellows on circuit, it seemed to me that I should stand convicted absolutely of bankruptcy and desertion of my vocation. I was trying, in fact, how long a man could anyhow manage to live, and to look tolerably decent, upon an income of nothing a year. The experiment was a painful one. My credit, never very considerable, was now diminishing fast. Moreover, I could not reasonably expect much further assistance from such of my friends —I had but few of any kind—as possessed money.

The return of November had brought with it Michaelmas Term and the recommencement of the reign of law at Westminster, after some months interregnum; the Long Vacation being one of those precious possessions of the British Constitution, which could not possibly be sundered from it without grave peril ensuing to all concerned. The usual train of judges, wearing their state robes and wigs, having breakfasted with the Lord Chancellor, in conformity with duty and old custom, passed along the Great Hall to their respective courts. Ushers, associates, clerks, and other officers, the supernumeraries attached to Justice's renowned and powerful dramatic troop, swelled the procession. The wonted crowd was in attendance, with its ordinary abundance of time and attention to spare for an exhibition at which the inconvenient preliminary of payment at the door was dispensed with. And the irrepressible pickpocket, dodging the watchfulness of the constable, was, after his manner, very well represented in the assembly, and pursued his trade with diligence and adroitness.

As in duty bound, I was also at Westminster, grudging much the cab-fare from the Temple, for shillings had come to be of serious consequence to me. By-and-bye I thought, with a sigh, I should perforce sink to counting my means in halfpence. I was duly dressed for the part I seemed to be always required to look, and never in truth to play. My stuff gown was shabby, and faded to a rusty brown; my bands were soiled and jagged at the edges; my wig lacked powder, and was much crumpled and dishevelled. I felt that my whole aspect advertised but too plainly my forlornness and poverty. I carried the conventional blue bag in my hand. It was not quite empty. For appearance sake I had thrust into it a law book or two and an old brief I had once held. But the cause it related to had never really come into court, and the fee marked upon it had never been paid. Be sure I had applied for the amount; but bankruptcy had overtaken the attorneys who had affected to require my services. I regarded the brief as my own property, therefore, and employed it to swell out my blue bag. So I loitered and wandered about in the different courts, hungry, envious, idle, hopeless. Could I help being so?

The judges and the leaders of the bar looked well, I noted: benefited by rural retirement and fresh air, nicely browned, most of them, by exposure to autumn sun and weather. Some had probably enjoyed good sport over turnips or in the coverts, by way of preparation for practice in the new term's battue of plaintiffs and defendants. And there had been vacation tours and rambles in great abundance, no doubt. I had been nowhere, of course, and for the old reason: no money. It was holiday to me all the year round, if absence of occupation can make a holiday. Heaven knows, I would have worked had the chance but offered.

And I had hoped that something might have come to me if only on account of the absence of others. Some crumbs from the master's table are popularly supposed to fall to the share of the barrister who remains in town during the vacation. But no crumbs, of comfort or otherwise, had fallen to me. So I was at the opening of the Law Courts as poor and woebegone, as when they closed. A tall, thin, limp, jaded man, with a lined face and grizzled whiskers, prematurely old-looking, carrying my bag, with its corpse of a brief shrouded in it, from court to court, trying to make believe that I was prosperous and busy, or, at any rate, that I was unprosperous and idle because I chose to be so. There were others about, comrades in misfortune, similarly circumstanced, I perceived, without, however, deriving any consolation from the fact. I had a fellow-feeling for them; but if one must suffer, it is preferable, I think, to suffer alone, individually, than mingled with others, lost in a crowd of victims. The briefless! What an ignoble army of martyrs they constitute! How amply they have furnished the jesters with food for mirth! What scant commiseration is ever bestowed upon them! From the popular point of view, a lawyer in trouble no more merits compassion than a rat in a trap. It has pleased the world to give us, as a class, a bad name, and some of us get hanged, or incur as bad a fate, in consequence. Others secure county court judgeships, or vast practice, and numberless briefs, and a few the woolsack. My destiny, as I have set forth, was to be one of the condemned, the distressed, the miserable.

I had no business at Westminster. I had held no briefs at the sessions or on circuit. It mattered little to me what the judges and the bar were busy about. Still I looked into one after another of the Common Law Courts in which I was supposed to practise. They were very crowded. The tribunals are a kind of theatre, and never lack their share of spectators. Naturally, perhaps, I could not find much entertainment in the proceedings. I knew too much about them. I had been behind the scenes too often. I was as an actor out of an engagement, doomed to see other actors assume the characters he most aspired to. The judges were in high good-humour, apparently. They came fresh to their work, and had, I suppose, enjoyed their breakfast with the Chancellor. They seemed inclined at times to temper justice with jocosity, and to make occasional sacrifice of their dignity to their sense of the facetious. I thought their mood rather unworthy of them; but I was prejudiced, no doubt. They had won in the struggle for success, and it is the privilege of winners to laugh; whereas I had lost heavily. I was more inclined to cry.

I listened to various speeches made by the more eminent leaders of the circuits: applications for new trials, on the grounds of excessive damages, misdirection of the presiding judge, verdicts against the weight of evidence, and so on. To me it was tiresome, unprofitable work, jargon, palaver, rigmarole. When the courts rose, I hurried back to Yew Tree-court, bearing, of course, my imposture of a blue bag along with me. I was thankful to quit Westminster, though certainly the Temple had few attractions for me. But there, at any rate, I was alone, unobserved. I escaped men's eyes. My misery was no longer public property.

Arrived in my chambers, I abruptly, and perhaps with some loss of temper, emptied the contents of my bag on to the floor of my sitting-room. To my surprise, there issued from it, in addition to the defunct brief and the law books, which I knew too well, a small crumpled bunch of paper, of which I certainly knew nothing. I kicked it with my boot. Was it a joke? Had any one thrust this strange-looking object into my bag while my attention had been otherwise attracted? I took up and unfolded the wrinkled ball, idly and carelessly at first, then with more and more attention. At last a gasp, almost a scream of amazement, broke from me.

It was composed of bank-notes! Ten five and ten ten-pound notes of the Bank of England. Startled and bewildered, with trembling fingers, I smoothed them out, and counted them again and again. Yes. Ten five and ten ten-pound notes.

Was it a joke? I re-demanded. How cruel, if it were so! I pored over them one after another. I held them up, each separately, to the light. I scrutinised them in every possible way. No. There was no doubt about it. They were genuine. Their validity could not be questioned or gainsaid. But how had they found their way into my bag?

I felt perplexed to giddiness. Where had I been? What had I been doing? Surely I had not robbed any one? It had not come to that. Not yet, at any rate. I was not mad. I was not dreaming. I tested my mental condition in various ways. I was awake, conscious. All was real, and

true, and explicable about me otherwise. How, then, to account for the presence of the notes in my trembling hands?

I retraced, mentally, my conduct during the day. It was clear, absurdly clear, that the notes were not in my possession when I left the Temple in the morning. The blue bag had never quitted my hand throughout the day. Even while in the cab, driving to Westminster, I remembered that I had held it tightly, for it occurred to me that I had almost laughed at myself, when I discovered how firmly I was keeping hold of what was in truth so valueless. I had stood for a few minutes in Westminster Hall watching the procession of the judges. I had hardly spoken to a soul. I had wandered, as I have already stated, from court to court. I was now somewhat dizzy and confused, wearied, and wanting food, but surely I was in my right senses then. I could not possibly have yielded to any insane impulse, and suddenly committed a theft. I dismissed the idea at once. It was dreadful, and it was too improbable. I had heard and read of curious instances of kleptomania, but I could in no way connect these with my own case. I had really been thrown into no situation in which theft, voluntary or involuntary, conscious or unconscious, was conceivable. I decided positively that, however the notes had come into my possession, I had not stolen them. From no action on my part had they come to me. How? Why? From whom? It was a surprising mystery. I could arrive at no conclusion that was in the least satisfactory.

I pondered and brooded over the thing until I was nearly distracted. Then I locked the money up in a secret drawer in my desk, and rushed out. But a little while ago solitude and seclusion had seemed to me infinitely preferable to society, and the chance of being observed. Now I was anxious to join my fellows, to mingle with the crowd in the streets. I felt that if left long alone in my garret, with those bank-notes before me, I should go mad.

What was I to do? Advertise in the newspapers that bank-notes of a stated amount had on such a day, under peculiar circumstances, come into my possession, and offer, upon due particulars being furnished and expenses defrayed, to restore them to their rightful owner? No doubt that was the proper course to pursue. I did not pursue it, however. It would have been a matter of some difficulty for me to have found the few shillings necessary to pay for the insertion of the advertisement. And a stronger motive deterred me from such a course. To speak plainly, I coveted the money. I longed to appropriate it. I could not bear the thought of surrendering it to another. However just his title to it, it seemed to me I had a paramount claim: my poverty. I set my want above his right. I determined to keep the money.

To be just to myself, however, I should state that before coming to this conclusion, although I did not advertise that I had found the money, I carefully watched the newspapers to see if the loser had advertised his loss. But I could discover no such notification; otherwise I should have taken pains to restore the missing money. Of this I have no doubt. For to take the lowest view of my situation and conduct—and certainly these were susceptible of the most ignoble interpretation—there would have been serious danger of exposure and disgrace, in attempting to make available notes that had been advertised as lost, and payment of which might possibly have been stopped at the Bank of England.

So for the present I resolved to do nothing but to wait, to watch the newspapers, and to retain the money. The only question was as to how long I should be able to keep the amount intact; for my necessities were really of a most urgent character. Again and again I found myself taking out the notes from my desk, turning them over, counting them, examining them anew, and then replacing them. There was pleasure in listening to the crisp rustling sound of the notes, as with a wet forefinger I reckoned them, after the manner of a banker's clerk, over and over. There was comfort in the sense of the potentiality of wealth afforded me by the spectacle of the money. How soon dared I try and change one of the notes? That was the question now constantly haunting me.

Lest I should be condemned too promptly let me state here more particularly how reduced was my condition—how pressing were my necessities. However painful, candour in this respect cannot now be avoided. To supply myself with food from day to day, I had been constrained to sell, book by book, my small but select and, at one time, really valuable library. I had parted with much of the furniture of my chambers. If unpretentious, this had been once, at any rate, of a substantial and comfortable kind. I had sold the few articles of plate I had brought with me from the university, and such little articles of

jewellery as, however unostentatious in such matters, a gentleman is accustomed to wear. Of late I had dispensed with the services of a laundress, partly because I could not afford to pay her small stipend, partly because I could not bear that she should know, and possibly report to others, my fallen state. I had sold the carpet and rug from my sitting-room; the sheets and blankets from my bedstead. I was without coals. I often walked about the streets after dusk to save buying candles. How long could I go on buying food? How soon should I die of destitution? It seemed to me only a question of time. Very soon I should be compelled to give over going out of doors during the daytime—my appearance was growing too squalid. Gradually I was consuming everything that was anyhow vendible, and therefore edible, in my chambers. The poor store was rapidly diminishing, and famine and I appeared to be distressingly near neighbours.

I say nothing of my debts. To a man who lacks bread, payment of his creditors is but a far-off, trifling matter. It is the advantage of great and urgent troubles that they absorb and devour petty difficulties. Despair gave me strength to despise my monetary embarrassments. Gradually nearing death from hunger, what did I care for the worst that debt could do to me?

And now this money had come! Should I give it up? Should I not rather keep it, spend it, and live by means of it? What was it but a real godsend to me? Or—and then my troubled mind turned to memories of old legends of tempted men, and purchased souls, and corrupt pacts with the Evil One. Was I bargaining away my salvation? Was this the consideration of the sale? Clearly, weakened by privation, undermined by despair, my intellect was yielding. I was already half crazy.

Sometimes I tried to think that some benevolent stranger—I had no friend I knew who could be credited with such conduct—had observed my destitute state, and chosen this eccentric method of relieving it. But the notion was not tenable. It was too romantic. Bank notes stuffed into a barrister's bag from motives of charity! It was preposterous.

For a time I hoarded the money. I dared not part with it; I dared not spend it. Then at last—really to buy food—I changed one of the notes. The agony I suffered the while! I was nearly fainting when I forced myself to comply with a very ordinary request—that I would write my name on the back of the note. I did so. I felt that the signature was hardly recognisable as mine. But that was accident. At the time I could not possibly have written more legibly, or in a less tremulous and feeble hand.

After this incident I endured terrible days of suspense. What would come of it? Would payment of the note be questioned anywhere? Would the real owner appear, confront, threaten, and punish me? All this seemed possible—likely even.

I remained in-doors waiting the result. If I had done wrong, certainly I underwent chastisement. I was reduced to a pitiable condition of nervous debility and irritation. A sudden single knock at my door set my heart leaping and aching, to an extent that is not to be expressed. At last, then, I was to find inquiry, exposure, a constable! My foreboding pictured an infinite panorama of humiliation and anguish. I was mistaken. My visitor knew nothing of these things. He was simply an attorney's clerk. He brought papers and a fee! My services were required, in no very intricate or important degree, as a special pleader.

The luck had turned. Employment had come to me. I was saved, while yet a large balance of the money I had found in my blue bag was untouched, ready for its owner if he would but present himself.

Strange to say, after this time my prospects and condition gradually brightened. I had work to do. Not to any wonderful extent, but still sufficient to enable me to live, and indeed more than this, to resume some of the decencies—the necessaries of existence others would call them—I had been forced to dispense with. I re-engaged the services of my laundress. By degrees I was able to take my clothes from the pawnbroker's, and to re-purchase one or two articles of furniture of which I stood in urgent need. My garret begun to look less wretched. My life seemed less gloomy; hope, or a ray of hope, once more illumined it. The air about me was clearer. I could breathe more freely.

In the spring I went on circuit; I had no great prospect of employment, but I was enabled without much difficulty to find means sufficient to defray all expenses. These I may explain to the lay reader are so ruled by the bar as not to press too onerously upon its junior members. Counsel on circuit are as a regiment on the march, "messing" together, and the rates of payment for lodging, &c., in the various assize towns, are the subject of strict regulation,

so that the rich advocate is not permitted to distress or discountenance his poorer brethren by any very lavish system of expenditure.

At Warwick, I remember, I occupied confined and quaintly furnished rooms over a barber's shop.

A brief was delivered me the day after my arrival in the town. It had reference to a criminal charge, and the fee was of small amount, the case being one of quite an ordinary character. I was instructed to defend a prisoner charged with robbery from the person with violence. The man's name was Michael Runt. No witnesses were to be called for the defence. I was provided with copies of the depositions taken before the local magistrates on the occasion of the prisoner being committed for trial, and some few general instructions. I was to dwell upon certain weak points in the case for the prosecution, and to subject one or two of the witnesses to a rather searching cross-examination.

I soon gathered that my task was not a very hopeful one. But I was bent upon doing the best I could with it; rather, I may frankly admit, for my own sake than the prisoner's. The chance of my distinguishing myself in the matter was small enough, but still in my situation the smallest chance was something to be prized. The solicitor employing me was not a practitioner of very nice repute, but undoubtedly his business was of an extensive and flourishing kind. In such wise his good opinion was worth winning. It might lead to my further employment.

My misgivings about the case strengthened very much when I came to see the prisoner. As he stood in the dock—allowing for the fact that the dock is very trying to appearance at all times, and that placed there even innocent persons acquire a certain equivocal and suspicious aspect—I decided at once that Michael Runt was guilty; more, that he was an old offender, an established member of the criminal class. He was undersized, with compressed, irregular features, and a narrow slanting forehead, over which he had smoothed his dull, coarse, mouse-coloured hair. He slouched as he stepped into the dock, and his small sharp eyes moved restlessly about with a kind of animal cunning, as he remarked his surroundings. He bowed to the judge and jury, and his general bearing was submissive even to servility. Yet something redeemed his appearance from being absolutely repulsive. He was refined, if I may say so, by an air of sickliness. He had a consumptive pallor of complexion, with a hectic spot of colour, about the size of a crown-piece, burning upon either cheek. His breathing was short, and he coughed painfully every now and then. That he was in a precarious state of health could not be questioned. And his hands it was to be noted, as they rested before him on the ledge of the dock, if not of very good shape, were yet waxen of hue, even to transparency, the fingers being very thin and long. They were the hands of a thief, it might be, certainly not the hands of a man used to rough labour. So far the sight of them would not assist his case with the jury. Except in this way: he was charged with robbery under circumstances of some violence. It was fair to raise the question: was he capable, judging from his appearance, of physical exertion of any pronounced kind? A rapid glance at my client decided me that his defence must consist in some such argument. Meantime I had to listen to the opening speech of the counsel for the Crown.

As I have said, the case presented no exceptional features, and I need not detain the reader with any detailed account of it. The facts were strong against the prisoner. A horse-fair had attracted a large assembly in a neighbouring town. My client was alleged to have come down from London with many associates in evil practices. They had surrounded and hustled the prosecutor, a burly tenant-farmer, who had been selling certain cattle at the fair. They had robbed him of his watch, and had only just been hindered from relieving him of his pocket-book. He had seized the prisoner, held him tightly, and handed him over to the constables. The watch, however, had not been found upon the prisoner. It was alleged that he had certainly taken it, but had succeeded in passing it on to his accomplices. The farmer had deposed to the identity of the prisoner, and to the fact that he had been the first assailant and had snatched and secured the watch.

The prosecutor gave his evidence in a sturdy, straightforward way enough. He was a middle-aged man, of powerful frame, with a flushed face that betokened rather inabstinent habits, or a constitutionally choleric disposition. His expression was one of somewhat obtuse obstinacy. His testimony, though no doubt in the main truthful, involved some inconsistency. He was anxious to have it understood that he

was perfectly sober at the time of the robbery; nevertheless, he was reluctant to admit that his property had been wrested from him without a struggle, in which a sober man of his muscular proportions could hardly have been worsted. He shrunk from conceding that the London thief had got the better of him, except by superior force. He had a countryman's pride, and did not like the notion of his vigilance and intelligence being discomfited by the cunning and sleight-of-hand of a cockney pickpocket. Yet the theory that he had really been defeated in an encounter with the puny creature in the dock seemed sufficiently improbable.

A dirty scrap of paper was passed from the prisoner to his attorney, and so on, to me. On it was written in a wretched scrawl: "The bloke was werry drunk." I pressed the witness on this point. Gradually he admitted that the alleged robbery took place after he had dined, very copiously indeed, at the farmer's ordinary, and that he had "refreshed" considerably before starting from home for the fair, and on his journey thither. A list he reluctantly furnished of his glasses of ale and rummers of brandy-and-water was of surprising length. The enumeration greatly amused the court, and even set the prisoner laughing. The witness lost his temper, and incurred the rebuke of the judge. He stuck persistently to the leading points of his case, however. He swore distinctly that he was quite sober; that the prisoner was the man who first assaulted him and took his watch, whereupon he had seized the thief and had held him until the arrival of the constables.

For the prisoner I did what I could, as it was clearly my duty to do, to present to the jury as favourable a view as could possibly be taken of his case. I argued that the charge against him was too full of doubt and improbability to justify his conviction. I maintained, in the old established way, that it was not for me to prove him innocent, but for the Crown to prove him guilty, and that the prosecution had completely failed so to do. I dwelt upon the absolute insufficiency of the evidence. The prosecutor was clearly intoxicated. Had there been a robbery at all? If so, where was the stolen property? We had only the word of a drunken man to prove that he had ever had a watch to lose. Could we on such evidence convict the prisoner of stealing a thing which had not been shown to exist other than in the imagination of a drunken man? Drunkards were notoriously the victims of delusions of all kinds. But I forbore to press this argument too strenuously. I saw that the jury believed in the existence of the watch. So, granting that the prosecutor had once possessed a watch, had there not been abundant opportunities, I asked, for his losing it throughout the day long before his meeting the prisoner? He had been in and out of public-houses, mingling for hours in the thick of the fair. Suddenly he missed the property which he had probably been deprived of hours before. Thereupon, angry and unreasonable from the fumes of the liquor he had consumed so excessively, he had arrested the nearest man to him, and charged him with the theft. The idea of a conflict between the two men I laughed to scorn. I bade the jury compare the physical proportions of the prosecutor and the prisoner. They were a giant and a pigmy, I said, and the suggestion that the pigmy had triumphed in the encounter I characterised as monstrous. I dismissed the idea that the prisoner had been assisted by others, but on that head I thought it advisable to say as little as possible. I paid a compliment to the skill and sagacity of the police, and urged that if there had been accomplices most certainly they would have been arrested long since, and made to stand beside my unhappy client in the dock.

The prisoner during the progress of my cross-examination and speech on his behalf had much pestered me with his crumpled notes. These contained nothing of real importance. They were brief, but wretchedly written and spelt. "Go it, counsellor," he wrote. "Hit him hard." This referred to the prosecutor. "He was blind drunk, and did not know nothing of what happened." "He could not know for certain it was me as took his ticker." "Put it as it was Flash Looney as did the trick. It can't hurt him. He's got a twelvemonth's hard already." I quote from memory, and have mended the spelling, but the communications were much to the above purport.

When I touched upon his ailing state, however, contrasting it with the prosecutor's air of robust health, the prisoner was quick to perceive that he could assist my arguments by assuming a corresponding demeanour. He left off writing notes. He was shaken by severe fits of coughing. He seemed nearly fainting from fatigue and weakness. He gasped for breath. He could with difficulty maintain an erect attitude.

Certainly, he displayed very considerable histrionic skill. He was really ill, but he contrived cleverly enough to aggravate all his symptoms of sickliness.

I need add little more about the trial. The judge summed up much, as I thought, to the disadvantage of the prisoner. The jury, however, after a few minutes' deliberation, returned a verdict of Not Guilty. Michael Runt was a free man. He disappeared from the dock very briskly indeed.

The prosecution confessed their disappointment. The man was an old offender, boasting many an alias. They were ready to show that he was well known to the police, and had been convicted on several previous occasions. Had he been found guilty, they were prepared to press for a severe sentence.

I have said that the trial was but of a commonplace kind, and I attach little importance to the exertions I had used on the prisoner's behalf. Still, I was congratulated on my success by many of my colleagues on circuit. I was told that I had made a very good defence. The judge had even gone out of his way in his summing up to compliment my advocacy. And I derived from my efforts decided advantages in the way of further employment. Altogether I profited very fairly that circuit. There really seemed to be a chance that within, let us say, ten years or so I should be generally recognised as "a rising junior." For at the bar juniors rarely rise until age has somewhat bowed them. They don't flower until late in the autumn of life, just as the much-cherished chrysanthemums in their own Temple Gardens flourish most in November.

CANVAS UNDER CANVAS.

"There is nothing in the whole world," said an eminent painter once, when expatiating on the delights of his gentle craft, "which an artist so thoroughly enjoys as painting his picture, except it is selling it afterwards." So, also, thinks the public, and although a little too prone to suppose that the limner's profession is exempt from the cares and anxieties incidental to every other, and that its followers generally lead an easy, idle, pipe-smoking kind of existence, the conclusion is correct. Nor is this wonderful, for is not the sight of an artist at his easel always pleasant? Does it not always conjure up ideas of patient reverential admiration for everything that is lovely? What can be more elevating and ennobling than the constant contemplation and delineation of the beautiful? And if it be pleasant to watch him at work in his studio with its tasteful surroundings, it becomes doubly so when, in a ramble beneath a summer sky, across some picturesque tract of country, we come upon him unexpectedly, ensconced in a quiet nook, sitting on his three-legged stool under the shade of his tent or white umbrella, labouring away at the glorious, ever-changing phases of nature spread out before him. Is it possible for any one, having the slightest admiration for the charms of mountain, wood, or waterfall, of sky, sea, or lake, to conceive an occupation so thoroughly engrossing or delightful, especially when we remember that it is the means by which the landscape painter lives? No wonder if the world is apt to say, "his work is all play, his labour is a labour of love," and that his life is, of all others, the lightest and freest from burden. Enjoyment, it would seem, could no further go! It signifies little under what conditions we find him; he ever presents, when thus engaged in his pursuit, a picture at once fascinating, suggestive, and agreeable.

Peep at him, for instance, when, in the sultry noontide heat, he sits, half hidden in the tall fern of the deep umbrageous recesses of a forest glade, with the ghostly century-old sentinels of oak and beech keeping watch around him, their grey gnarled trunks flecked with specks of sun and shadow from bright sky and fretwork of leafy roof, and where the deer, unconscious of his presence, stray close to him on the windward side until, aware of his intrusion on their domain, they, with a sudden frightened start, burst madly down a drive.

Again, see him on a breezy, open, heather-clad moorland, depicting the fleeting gleams of sunshine and cloud-shadow, as they chase each other across the purple level and over the little knolls and breaks, and so up the rolling mountain spurs, until upon the rugged sides of the great hills themselves they are lost in the mists which cap the highest peaks. Or, when the tide is out, and the fishing craft are lying in their furrows of beach sand, surrounded by all the "picturesque lumber" of the shore, watch him as he, with his canvas under canvas, is making headway with his work by the "sad sea waves." Surely an enviable being is he under any of these circumstances, and equally so do we esteem

him if we catch sight of his tent, or white umbrella, by the side of a boulder-bedded torrent "far down a valley lonely." And if we find him ensconced among the reeds and willows of a broad flowing river's bank, or amidst the nodding corn-sheaves, and reapers at their work, in the water meadows, where the cattle, strayed and scattered over the mead, attract his pencil, does he not lend additional interest to the scene?

Once more, does not his gipsy-like encampment and its surroundings irresistibly entice us towards him, if we discover them nestling by some ancient castle-keep, or old abbey ruin, and are we not tempted, as before, to intrude upon his enjoyable solitude, and to behave almost as badly in our endeavours to get a glimpse of his sketch, or picture, as do sometimes the gaping yokels, urchins, and provincial citizens, who surround him in a hustling and jostling crowd, whenever they catch sight of him in the suburbs or the streets of some mediæval town, revelling in his grateful task? In a word, whensoever and wheresoever he pitches his tent, at home or abroad, your landscape painter—be he sketcher in water-colour or oil, or high finisher in both; spend he, as a squatter with very portable traps, six hours, or, as a settler with full camp equipage, six months over one subject—has, in our eyes, the very best of times of it; and one might almost admit that the pleasantness of his pursuit is sufficient compensation, and that to pay him handsomely for his work is a piece of supererogation. The man who has to go through essentially disagreeable, unhealthy, irksome, but necessary duties, is the man who should be highly paid, not he whose daily occupation is one round of successive delights. Yet the remuneration, now-a-days, is certainly no less satisfactory than is the following of the art itself. Sir Marler would twist you his moustache, and, with a disdainful twirl of his maulstick, inform you that your notions about the pleasures of his life were somewhat exaggerated. He would discourse you between the puffs of his pipe of the thousand and one discomforts, anxieties, and miseries which his labours on his canvas under canvas entails.

All the elements, he would tell you, that conspire to make his life enjoyable, bring with them each corresponding difficulties. The wind, which sets the waves and sky in motion, and helps to give the landscape painter the beauties of light and shade, is at times his bitterest enemy. It rattles and flutters his canvas or paper at the most ticklish moments; it whirls dust in his eyes, and over his wet colours; it insinuates itself under his coat-tails, and flaps them on to his delicately graduated tints, just as he has washed or rubbed them in; it eddies round, and lunges at him in every diabolical and impossible way, finally wriggling under his tent or umbrella, and, despite all pegs and cords, lifting it bodily high into the air, like an impromptu misshapen captive balloon.

The sun, too, won't shine when he wants to see the effect and form of a particular mass of light and dark, and bursts out unclouded when the whole feeling of his subject is essentially grey. After he has trudged some weary miles to a pet view, his paraphernalia on his back, rain sets in immediately he has settled to his easel, driving him home after long struggling and persevering against it, only to cease when he has finally made up his mind to abandon work for the day. Chill winds, scorching sun, drenching rain, stinging midges, all sorts of biting, tickling, crawling insects, gaping chawbacons, insolent children, savage dogs, enraged cattle, dreary lodgings in lonely farms, or questionable quarters in roadside stale-tobacco-smelling inns, tough mutton, and sour beer—these, and many more such troubles, will our landscape painter detail to you and make moan about. He may say nothing of unsuccessful work done, miserable blots, futile attempts, wretched renderings of splendid subjects, heart-burnings and disappointments at imperfect imitations of natural objects, which may drive him to do violence upon his picture. But such conditions arise. He may not be eloquent upon the follies and drivelling imbecilities to which, by his failures, he is reduced; nevertheless, evidence exists that he can be brought to a very low condition of mind indeed, for, reminded possibly by early arithmetical difficulties, he has occasionally broken out into puerile verse, and has been known to carve upon a boulder-stone, or upon the soft face of some sandstone rock, his lay; the Lay of the Landscape Painter on the Sea-shore running thus:

> Stratification is vexation,
> Pebbles are as bad,
> The rolling sea doth puzzle me,
> And clouds they drive me mad.

Yet these are but temporary moods, and soon pass, only to leave him more determined than ever to carry out his purpose, and capture the coveted beauty before him; for this inextinguishable love for his art is the mainspring which keeps him going, and induces him, from the first, voluntarily to

encounter the difficulties of his profession. Were it not for this deep-seated love, the inevitable failures to which he is constantly subjected all through his life (for as his powers increase so does his ambition, each success only urging him forward to greater efforts, your true artist never being really satisfied, but always wanting to do better) would overwhelm him, and painting would become a task as ungrateful as any merely mechanical process by which a man must earn his bread. So then, despite the little grumblings of our friend, we return to our first proposition, despite his assertion (a perfectly true one, by the way) that painting from nature as he does, going to his work early in the morning, returning from it late at night, like any labouring man, is a very different thing to daintily dallying for an hour or two with enticing looking sketching materials, when we find ourselves idle in the country, or on our tours amongst peaks, passes, and glaciers. Despite all this, we say, we shall continue to believe that the landscape painter's lines are cast in pleasant places. The mere fact of having to spread his canvas in the open air, at a season when "all who are in populous cities pent" long to escape to the sea, the fields, or woods, and to have to busy himself only with objects which are a delight to eyes, ears, and nose, is sufficient to make his occupation pre-eminently attractive. And in his idle moments, too—for, however engrossed he may be by his art, he should not always be before his easel — see what enjoyment is within his reach. Who so happy as he, with rod and line perhaps, whipping the stream for spotted trout, and imperceptibly drinking in all the elements of beauty which surround him? Compared with the mere angler, is not his enjoyment double? Does he not get a thousand inspirations and suggestions out of every bend of the tiny stream or rushing river, as he gently plods from pool to pool? Now, with agile steps, he crosses and recrosses the flowing water, sometimes wading ankle-deep, at others balancing himself upon the slippery stepping-stones, until, tired of the sport, he stretches himself at full length upon a pleasant shady bank, and smokes a pipe, or makes a jotting of some picturesque effect or form in his pocket sketch-book. If the fish be shy, and his basket empty, his time is by no means lost. He has seen, perhaps, enough to allure him to the spot again, when, with brushes and with palette, he will capture something that shall be more lasting in its beauty even than his finny prey, for nowhere in such scenes as the fisherman loves to frequent can the artist's eye be idle.

Botanising, or geologising, too, if he have tastes that way, must equally lead him to haunts out of which some suggestions may arise, some sort of capital be made. Climbing for a choice specimen that is beyond his reach, likely enough he puts up (to use a sporting phrase) some subject little dreamt of as he strolled along the lane, or beneath the overhanging rocks.

If he be a cricketer, the "district eleven" will be glad of his aid any evening on the common, or the village-green, and the steadiness of his hand will be none the less next day from the exercise, if his genial good-fellowship do not tempt him to "keep it up" too late after supper.

On the sea-coast he should be no less at home, and ready to take an oar or haul on to a rope with the best of the fishermen in the little harbour, combining sport with study in almost every relation of his rural life. A swimmer he is sure to be, and either in the "fresh" or "salt," need never fail to get his morning dip with unbroken regularity from early May till late October. Learned he must inevitably become in all that appertains to country life, for is he not its high priest? Are not its materials in every detail his stock-in-trade; and must not every sight, and almost every sound, come under his keenest observation, from roaring winds and rushing waters to the hum of insects and the song of birds? Ay, even from the gentle woodland warblers to the screeching sea fowl! In all the infinite variety of their notes, he will somehow get to take an interest, and to distinguish and identify the language of his feathered neighbours as readily as the voices of his friends, and now and then it will serve his purpose to bring one down with his gun, and stuff its skin, and set it up in his studio at home as "a property" of endless use to paint from. Farm labour, likewise, cannot go unobserved by him, and in localities where hideous machinery has not banished the picturesque plough or harrow-team, and such handwork as may form a foreground incident, he will have occasion to study the action, effect, and habits of all the rural population. A simplicity of thought and mode of life, especially healthful both to mind and body, should be the characteristic result of such a training—a result of no mean worth in these days, when to seem what one really is has become unfashionable. On every hand, then, from his hardest

and most earnest hours of work, when his whole soul is given up to the perpetuation of nature's choicest pictures, down to his hours of merest idleness, when he lies prone, pipe in mouth, on the verge of some breezy cliff, or in the depths of a shady copse, the conclusion is that the landscape painter's life is without parallel for enjoyment, when he sets up his studio in the open air, and labours conscientiously upon his "canvas under canvas."

VAMPYRES AND GHOULS.

These gentry are not yet quite dead. At least the belief in them still lingers in some country districts; while in South-Eastern Europe, and South-Western Asia, the credence prevails among whole tribes, and even nations. There appears to be no essential difference between the European vampyre and the Asiatic ghoul—a sort of demon, delighting to animate the bodies of dead persons, and feed upon their blood. It is believed that the superstition has existed in the Levant since the time of the ancient Greeks; but among that artistic people the vampyre was a lamia, a beautiful woman, who allured youths to her, and then fed upon their young flesh and blood. Be that as it may, the Byzantine Christians, after the time of Constantine, entertained a belief that the bodies of those who died excommunicated were kept by an emissary of the Evil One, who endowed them with a sort of life, sufficient to enable them to go forth at night from their graves, and feast on other men. The only way to get rid of these passive agents of mischief was to dig the bodies up from the graves, disexcommunicate them, and bury them.

William of Newbury, who lived in the twelfth century, narrates that in Buckinghamshire a man appeared several times to his wife after he had been buried. The archdeacon and clergy, on being applied to, thought it right to ask the advice of the bishop of the diocese, as to the proper course to be pursued. He advised that the body should be burned—the only cure for vampyres. On opening the grave, the corpse was found to be in the same state as when interred; a property, we are told, generally possessed by vampyres.

The most detailed vampyre stories belong to the Danubian and Greek countries. Tournefort describes a scene that came under his personal notice in Greece. A peasant of Mycone was murdered in the fields in the year 1701. He had been a man of quarrelsome, ill-natured disposition: just the sort of man, according to the current belief of the peasantry, to be haunted by vampyres after death. Two days after his burial, it was noised abroad that he had been seen to walk in the night with great haste, overturning people's goods, putting out their lights, pinching them, and playing them strange pranks. The rumour was so often repeated, that at length the priests avowed their belief in its truth. Masses were said in the chapels, and ceremonies were performed, having for their object to drive out the vampyre that inhabited the dead man. On the tenth day after the burial, a mass was said, the body was disinterred, and the heart taken out. Frankincense was burned to ward off infection; but the bystanders insisted on the smoke of the frankincense being a direct emanation from the dead body—a sure sign, according to popular belief, of vampyrism. They burned the heart on the sea-shore, the conventional way of getting rid of vampyres. Still this did not settle the matter. Positive statements went the round of the village that the dead man was still up to all kinds of mischief, beating people in the night, breaking down doors, unroofing houses, shaking windows. The matter became serious. Many of the inhabitants were so thoroughly frightened and panic-stricken as to flee; while those who remained nearly lost all self-control. They debated, they fasted, they made processions through the village, they sprinkled the doors of the houses with holy water, they speculated as to whether mass had been properly said, and the heart properly burned. At length they resolved to burn the body itself; they collected plenty of wood, pitch, and tar, and carried out their plan. Tournefort (who had found it necessary to be cautious as to expressing his incredulity), states that no more was heard of the supposed vampyre.

In the year 1725, on the borders of Hungary and Transylvania, a vampyre story arose, which was renewed afterwards in a noteworthy way. A peasant of Madveiga, named Arnold Paul, was crushed to death by the fall of a waggon-load of hay. Thirty days afterwards, four persons died, with all the symptoms (according to popular belief) of their blood having been sucked by vampyres. Some of the neighbours remembered having heard Arnold say that he had often been tormented by a vampyre; and they jumped to a conclusion that the passive vampyre had now become active. This was in accordance with a kind of formula or theorem on the subject: that a man

who, when alive, has had his blood sucked by a vampyre, will, after his death, deal with other persons in like manner. The neighbours exhumed Arnold Paul, drove a stake through the heart, cut off the head, and burned the body. The bodies of the four persons who had recently died were treated in a similar way, to make surety doubly sure. Nevertheless, even this did not suffice. In 1732, seven years after these events, seventeen persons died in the village near about one time. The memory of the unlucky Arnold recurred to the villagers; the vampyre theory was again appealed to; he was believed to have dealt with the seventeen as he had previously dealt with the four; and they were therefore disinterred, the heads cut off, the hearts staked, the bodies burned, and the ashes dispersed. One supposition was that Arnold had vampyrised some cattle, that the seventeen villagers had eaten of the beef, and had fallen victims in consequence. This affair attracted much attention at the time. Louis the Fifteenth directed his ambassador at Vienna to make inquiries in the matter. Many of the witnesses attested on oath that the disinterred bodies were full of blood, and exhibited few of the usual symptoms of death: indications which the believers in vampyres stoutly maintained to be always present in such cases. This has induced many physicians to think that real cases of catalepsy or trance were mixed up with the popular belief, and were supplemented by a large allowance of epidemic fanaticism.

In Epirus and Thessaly there is a belief in living vampyres, men who leave their shepherd dwellings by night, and roam about, biting and tearing men and animals. In Moldavia the traditional priccolitsch, and in Wallachia the murony, must be somewhat remarkable beings. They are real living men, who become dogs at night, with the backbone prolonged to form a sort of tail; they roam through the villages, delighting to kill cattle.

Calmet, in his curious work relating to the marvels of the phantom world, quotes a letter which was written in 1738, and which added one to the long list of vampyre stories belonging to the Danubian provinces. "We have just had in this part of Hungary a scene of vampyrism, duly attested by two officials of the tribunal of Belgrade, who went down to the places specified; and by an officer of the emperor's troops at Graditz, who was an ocular witness of the proceedings. At the beginning of September there died in the village of Kisilony, three leagues from Graditz, a man sixty-two years of age. Three days after his burial he appeared in the night to his son, and asked for something to eat. The son having given him something, he ate and disappeared. The next day the son recounted to his neighbours what had occurred. That night the father did not appear; but on the following night he showed himself, and asked again for food. They do not know whether the son gave him any on that occasion or not; but on the following day the son was found dead in his bed. On that same day five or six persons in the village fell suddenly ill, and died one after another in a few days." The villagers resolved to open the grave of the old man, and examine the body; they did so, and declared that the symptoms presented were such as usually pertain to vampyrism—eyes open, fresh colour, &c. The executioner drove a stake into the heart, and reduced the body to ashes. All the other persons recently dead were similarly exhumed; but as they did not exhibit the suspicious symptoms, they were quietly reinterred.

One theory in that part of Europe is, that an illegitimate son of parents, both of whom are illegitimate, is peculiarly likely to become a vampyre. If a dead body is supposed to be vampyrised it is taken up; should the usual symptoms of decay present themselves, the case is supposed to be a natural one, and the body is sprinkled with holy water by the priest; but should the freshness above adverted to appear, the ordeal of destruction is at once decided on. In some parts of Wallachia, skilled persons are called in to prevent a corpse from becoming a vampyre, by various charms, as well as by the rougher and coarser plan of driving a nail through the head. One charm is to rub the body in various places with the lard of a pig killed on St. Ignatius's Day; another is, to lay by the side of the body a stick made of the stem of a wild rose. Some of the vampyrised persons are believed, when they emerge from their graves at night, not to go about in human form, but as dogs, cats, frogs, toads, fleas, lice, bugs, spiders, &c., sucking the blood of living persons by biting them in the back or neck. This belief forcibly suggests one remark: that as the peasantry in those parts of Europe are wofully deficient in cleanliness of person, clothing, and bedding, nothing is more likely than that they are bitten at

night by some of the smaller creatures above named, without the assistance of any vampyre.

Mr. Pashley, in his Travels in Crete, states that when he was at the town of Askylo, he asked about the vampyres or katakhanadhes, as the Cretans called them —of whose existence and doings he had heard many recitals, stoutly corroborated by the peasantry. Many of the stories converged towards one central fact, which Mr. Pashley believed had given origin to them all. On one occasion a man of some note was buried at St. George's Church at Kalikrati, in the island of Crete. An arch or canopy was built over his grave. But he soon afterwards made his appearance as a vampyre, haunting the village, and destroying men and children. A shepherd was one day tending his sheep and goats near the church, and on being caught in a shower, went under the arch to seek shelter from the rain. He determined to pass the night there, laid aside his arms, and stretched himself on a stone to sleep. In placing his fire-arms down (gentle shepherds of pastoral poems do not want fire-arms; but the Cretans are not gentle shepherds), he happened to cross them. Now this crossing was always believed to have the effect of preventing a vampyre from emerging from the spot where the emblem was found. Thereupon occurred a singular debate. The vampyre rose in the night, and requested the shepherd to remove the fire-arms in order that he might pass, as he had some important business to transact. The shepherd, inferring from this request that the corpse was the identical vampyre which had been doing so much mischief, at first refused his assent; but on obtaining from the vampyre a promise on oath that he would not hurt him, the shepherd moved the crossed arms. The vampyre, thus enabled to rise, went to a distance of about two miles, and killed two persons, a man and a woman. On his return, the shepherd saw some indication of what had occurred, which caused the vampyre to threaten him with a similar fate if he divulged what he had seen. He courageously told all, however. The priests and other persons came to the spot next morning, took up the corpse (which in daytime was as lifeless as any other) and burnt it. While burning, a little spot of blood spurted on the shepherd's foot, which instantly withered away; but otherwise no evil resulted, and the vampyre was effectually destroyed. This was certainly a very peculiar vampyre story; for the coolness with which the corpse and the shepherd carried on their conversation under the arch was unique enough. Nevertheless, the persons who narrated the affair to Mr. Pashley firmly believed in its truth, although slightly differing in their versions of it.

Modern vampyres in Western Europe seldom trouble society, so far as narratives tell; but across the Atlantic something of the kind has occupied public attention within the limits of the present generation. In 1854, the Times gave an extract from an American newspaper, the Norwich Courier, concerning an event that had just occurred. Horace Ray, of Griswold, died of consumption in 1846; two of his children afterwards died of the same complaint; eight years afterwards, in 1854, a third died. The neighbours, evidently having the vampyre theory in their thoughts, determined to exhume the bodies of the first two children, and burn them; under the supposition that the dead had been feeding on the living. If the dead body remained in a fresh or semi-fresh state, all the vampyre mischief would be produced. In what state the bodies were really found we are not told; but they were disinterred and burned on the 8th of June in the above-named year.

This superstition appears to be closely connected with that of the Were-wolf, which sometimes presents very terrible features. Medical men give the name of lycanthropy to a kind of monomania which lies at the bottom of all the were-wolf stories. In popular interpretation, a were-wolf is a man or woman who has been changed into the form of a wolf, either to gratify a taste for human flesh and blood, or as a Divine punishment. The Reverend Baring Gould narrates the history of Marshal de Retz, a noble, brave, and wealthy man of the time of Charles the Seventh in France. He was sane and reasonable in all matters save one; but in that one he was a terrible being. He delighted in putting young and delicate children to death, and then destroying them, without (so far as appears) wishing to put the flesh or the blood to his lips. In the course of a lengthened trial which brought his career to an end, the truth came to light that he had destroyed eight hundred children in seven years. There was neither accusation nor confession about a wolf here; it was a man afflicted with a morbid propensity of a dreadful kind. Somewhat different was the case of Jean Grenier, in 1603. He was a herd-boy, aged fourteen, who was brought before a

tribunal at Bordeaux on a most extraordinary charge. Several witnesses, chiefly young girls, accused him of having attacked them under the guise of a wolf. The charge was strange, but the confession was still stranger; for the boy declared that he had killed and eaten several children, and the fathers of those children asserted the same thing. Grenier was said to be half an idiot; if so, his idiocy on the one hand, and the superstitious ignorance of the peasantry on the other, may perchance supply a solution to the enigma. One of the most extraordinary cases on record occurred in France in 1849, the facts being brought to light before a court-martial, presided over by Colonel Manselon. Many of the cemeteries near Paris were found to have been entered in the night, graves opened, coffins disturbed, and dead bodies strewed around the place in a torn and mangled condition. This was so often repeated, and in so many cemeteries, that great anguish and terror were spread among the people. A strict watch was kept. Some of the patrols or police of the cemeteries thought they saw a figure several times flitting about among the graves, but could never quite satisfy themselves on the matter. Surgeons were examined, to ascertain whether it was the work of the class of men who used in England to be called resurrectionists, or body-snatchers; but they all declared that the wild reckless mutilation was quite of another character. Again was a strict watch kept; a kind of man-trap was contrived at a part of the wall of Père la Chaise cemetery, which appeared as if it had been frequently scaled. A sort of grenade connected with the man-trap was heard to explode; the watch fired their guns; some one was seen to flee quickly; and then they found traces of blood, and a few fragments of military clothing, at one particular spot. Next day, it became publicly known that a non-commissioned officer of the Seventy-fourth Regiment had returned wounded to the barracks in the middle of the night, and had been conveyed to a military hospital. Further inquiry led to a revelation of the fact that Sergeant Bertrand, of the regiment here named, was the unhappy cause of all the turmoil. He was in general demeanour kind and gentle, frank and gay; and nothing but a malady of a special kind could have driven him to the commission of such crimes as those with which he was charged, and which his own confession helped to confirm. He described the impulse under which he acted as being irresistible, altogether beyond his own control; it came upon him about once a fortnight. He had a terrible consciousness while under its influence, and yet he could not resist. The minute details which he gave to the tribunal of his mode of proceeding at the cemeteries might suit those who like to sup on horrors, but may be dispensed with here. Suffice it to say that he aided by his confession to corroborate the charge; that he was sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment; and that eminent physicians of Paris endeavoured to restore the balance of his mind during his quiet incarceration.

Fifty years ago, vampyre literature had a temporary run of public favour. The Vampyre, or the Bride of the Isles, a drama, and The Vampyre, a melodrama in two acts, were presented at the theatres: the hero being enacted by some performer who had the art of making himself gaunt and ghastly on occasions. There was also a story under the same title, purporting to be by the Right Honourable Lord Byron, which attracted notice. The form of the superstition chiefly prevalent in modern Greece is that vampyres, notwithstanding all the means used to destroy their bodies, will resume their shape, and recommence their mischievous wanderings, as soon as the rays of moonlight fall on their graves. This serves as the foundation of the tale in question. But Lord Byron repudiated it. In a characteristic letter to Galignani, he said: "If the book is clever, it would be base to deprive the real writer, whoever he may be, of his honours; if stupid, I desire the responsibility of nobody's dulness but my own." The authorship was afterwards claimed by another writer, who stated that the idea of the tale had been suggested to his mind by something he had met with in Byron.

All the stories of vampyres, ghouls, and were-wolves, we may safely assert, can find their solution in a combination of three causes — a sort of epidemic superstition among ignorant persons; some of the phenomena of trance or epileptic sleep; and special monomaniac diseases which it is the province of the physician to study.

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THE ROSE AND THE KEY.

CHAPTER XLVI. GRIEF.

AT Roydon Hall, whither Doctor Malkin's thoughts had led him this morning, dulness reigned.

Maud was relieved of the embarrassment of a tête-à-tête with her mother at breakfast, by Lady Vernon's remaining in her room, in consequence of a cold.

She missed her cheery and energetic cousin. How on earth could she dispose of the day? She could have a carriage, of course, if she pleased, and drive where she liked. Whom should she visit?

About one o'clock her doubts on this point were ended by the arrival of Miss Tintern, who came to see her, having a great deal to say, and looking unhappy. She had come alone. Her father had ridden over to the Wymering Sessions.

"Is Lady Vernon coming down?" she asked immediately after their salutation.

"I can't say. But do you wish that we should be to ourselves?"

"Immensely. I have ever so much to tell you."

The young lady was in great distress.

"I don't know, Maud, whether I ought to tell you. It would, I fear, only embarrass you; but I have no one to speak to."

"What would embarrass me?"

"Keeping my secret, dear Maud."

"Never mind—not a bit. I'm not the least afraid," said Miss Maud, eagerly; for what young lady objects to hearing a secret?

"It is a secret I would not have told to any living creature for the world."

"Of course; I quite understand that. But I have no one to tell anything to, if I wished it. Mamma——"

"Oh, not *that* for the world!"

"Not to mamma? No, of course. But why particularly must it be concealed from her?"

"Well, I'll explain by-and-bye. Do you think she will come here? I should not like to be surprised. Would you mind walking out among the flowers? We could not be taken unawares there."

"I was thinking of that myself," said Maud, and the two young ladies walked into the garden.

As soon as they got to a quiet spot, under the three acacia-trees, with the scarlet and blue verbena in front, Miss Tintern looked round softly, and being assured that they were not observed, she began to pour forth her sorrows.

She began by narrating how Mr. Plimby, of Cowslip Meads, that detestable old bachelor, had wanted to dance very often with her at the Wymering ball, and how, after her papa had at last made her give him a quadrille, he had hardly left her for ten minutes all the rest of the evening.

"Oh, my dear Ethel, is he in love with you? Is he in love? I know he is. Oh, how delightful!" cried Maud, in an ecstasy of laughter.

"There's nothing to laugh at," said Ethel Tintern, a good deal hurt. "Don't you see how vexed I am, Maud?"

"He is such a figure! He is such a wonderful creature!" and again she broke into peals of laughter.

"Well, Maud, perhaps I had better come another day."

"Oh, oh, oh!" almost sobbed Maud, recovering a little, with tears in her eyes. "I'm so sorry I've interrupted you so shamefully. But he always struck me as so delightfully ridiculous; do tell me the rest."

"I suppose it is ridiculous, at least to every one who does not suffer from it; but

for me it is the greatest vexation. I wish it was no worse, but it is a great deal worse —vexation is no name for it."

"You must tell me all about it," said Maud. "You look so tragical, Ethel. Why, after all, it can't be so very awful. I don't think Mr. Plimby will run away with you against your will."

"Listen now, and judge; but, oh, Maud, remember what a confidence it is! I am going to tell you things, that but one other person in the world knows anything of."

"I'll not tell, I assure you, mamma never giving me an opportunity; and, besides, she is the last person on earth I should volunteer to tell anything to."

"No; I was thinking more of Miss Medwyn."

"Max shan't hear one word about it; no, upon my honour, not a living being shall ever hear a word about it till you give me leave."

And the young lady drew Miss Tintern towards her and kissed her.

"I know you won't tell. Where did I leave off? Oh yes, he has been, at one time or another, every day since the ball, to call at the Grange."

"And do you mean to tell me that all this mischief has been done by one quadrille at the Wymering ball?"

"No; it seems he has been paying me pretty little attentions, though I never perceived it, for more than a year, and I suppose he thinks he has made an impression, and that the time has come for being more explicit. And he has actually spoken to papa, who sent him to me."

"Well?"

"I refused him, of course. You could not suppose anything else."

"Well, then, if you did, where's the distress? I can't see what there is to trouble you."

"Well, listen. After I had refused him, papa, who was waiting to see him before he went, persuaded him that it was all a mistake, and that I did not know my own mind. This occurred yesterday, and he fixed to-morrow for his return to the Grange, where he is to have another interview with me. Only think!"

"Well, there's no great danger from that, is there?" said Maud.

"Wait till I've told you all. Papa returned, having spoken to him, and sent for me. He seemed very ill and pale, and I soon perceived he was very much agitated. I can never forget his face. And then he told me, oh, Maud, Maud! what I had not a suspicion of. He has been making immense speculations in mines, and they have turned out badly, and he says he is ruined, and Mr. Plimby is his principal creditor, and that his being able still to live at the Grange, depends altogether on my saying 'yes,' and marrying him."

"Oh, darling! I'm so awfully sorry," said Maud, in consternation. "But it can't possibly be. Oh no! I believe every one exaggerates when they lose. You'll find it is nothing so bad as he thinks."

But Maud's consolation failed to comfort Miss Tintern—failed even to reassure herself.

"Well, Ethel, if things do go wrong, remember I shall be my own mistress very soon. I intend to go to my cousin Maximilla, and live with her, and you shall come —I'm quite serious—and live with us. We shall be the three happiest old maids in England. But, after all, Mr. Plimby, they say, is very rich, and no one, that I know of, ever said anything against him. I don't recommend him particularly, but he might be a better husband than a great many men who are thought very eligible indeed."

"No, no, *no*, Maud, dear. I know it is kindly said, but all that tortures me—it is totally impossible—and oh, Maud, darling, I am in such misery! Oh, Maud, you will think me so odious, and yet I could not help it. It was not my secret; but I have been concealing something ever so long, and I know you'll hate me."

"Hate you! Nonsense; what is it?"

And upon this invitation, with an effort, Miss Tintern told the story of her engagement to Captain Vivian.

"It was when I was at the Carisbrokes', last summer; and it has been ever since; and he has insisted on its being a secret; and I'm ashamed to look you in the face, Maud. And oh, what am I to do?"

And she threw her arms round Maud's neck and cried.

Maud, if the truth must be told, was a little affronted. The idea of having been duped and made use of by Captain Vivian to conceal his real attachment to another young lady, stung her pride.

"What am I to do, what am I to do?" sobbed poor Ethel's voice.

"What are you to do? By all means marry him, if you like him well enough. But I don't think he is the least worthy of you. I don't know a great deal of him. Very little, considering that he was so long here. He dances very nicely, that I do know, for I danced two or three dances with him at the ball. It may be that I

don't know him as well as other people, but he seems nothing like good enough for you."

Miss Tintern met this with a protest, and a torrent of the sort of eulogy with which the enamoured astonish those who still enjoy their senses, and then she continued:

"Oh, Maud, it is such a lesson to me. I ought never to have consented to this miserable concealment, and the idea of giving up Evelyn is simply despair—I should die."

"Well, don't give him up."

"I could not if I wished."

"Some way or other it will all come right, you'll find. How is Mr. Tintern; not ill, I hope?"

"He seems absent and anxious, but he bears up wonderfully; and he goes to sessions, and everything else, just as usual. I never was so astonished as when I learned the awful news from him."

"I don't think it is quite so bad as he would have you believe; that is, I'm sure he is making the worst of it."

"Well, darling Maud, I feel better since I told you. I think I should have gone mad if I had not some one like you just now to talk to; and remember, Maud, not a word to Miss Medwyn."

"Not one word, I promise, to a living creature."

"I'll not ask to see Lady Vernon. You can tell her I came in, but she was not down. I'll get into the carriage, now. Good-bye." And so she departed, and Maud returned to the house, wondering.

CHAPTER XLVII. ROYDON PARK.

In the evening of that very lonely day Maud took a ramble in the park of Roydon.

There is nothing very bold or striking in the park, but it is prettily varied, with many rising undulations and rocky, fern-clad knolls, and many winding hollows. Here the yellow gorse perfumes the air, and brambles straggle over the rocks; the hawthorn and birch-trees stretch from their clefts, and pretty wild flowers show their many hues in sheltered nooks, while, all around, in groups or singly, stand the nobler forest trees, casting their mighty shadows along the uneven sward.

Maud was passing through a gentle hollow, almost a little glen, when she heard the tramp of running feet near her. A little boy was scampering along the summit of the narrow hollow at the other side.

She called to him, and he halted. She observed that the boy had a note in his hand, and beckoned him to approach. After a moment's hesitation, he descended the bank at his leisure, and stood before her.

"What are you doing here, my little man?" she asked. "Aren't you afraid that the keepers will find you?"

"I was taking a message up to the Hall yonder, but the lady's not there. Happen you'll be her?"

"What is her name?"

"Miss Mack—Mack-something—Medwyn!"

"Oh! Miss Maximilla Medwyn?"

"Ay, that will be it," replied the boy.

"No, she's not there now. Miss Medwyn left the Hall yesterday," said the young lady, looking with an unconscious scrutiny at the note he held clutched in his dirty little fist.

"Ay," said the boy.

"And you can tell whoever wishes to send the letter, that any one by asking at the house can learn where Miss Medwyn is at present."

"Ay, sure," said the boy again, and started once more to find his employer.

Very curious was Maud; but she did not continue her walk in its former direction. She turned about, and at the same quiet pace began to saunter towards home.

She had not reached the end of this shallow glen when she was again overtaken, and this time it was Charles Marston who was beside her.

"I hope you are not vexed. I am sure you won't be when you hear."

Maud was more startled than she would have cared to betray, and there followed a very short silence. She had set down Captain Vivian as Maximilla's correspondent, and had never suspected such a move on Mr. Marston's part. It was unlike him. It was hardly consistent with his promise to her. Yet she was glad.

"I'm not vexed, I assure you," she said, smiling a little, and blushing very much, as she gave him her hand. "A little boy overtook me just now, when I was going in the opposite direction, and told me he had been looking for Miss Medwyn at the house, to give her a note. I dare say he was your messenger?"

"He was. I had sent to find her, that I might ask her fifty things, and, above all, whether she thought she could persuade you to see me for a very few minutes."

"Well, it has come about, you see, by accident."

"And that is better, and—don't, I entreat, walk so fast—you won't refuse me a few minutes?" She did walk slower.

"Our walk must not be very far," she

said. "Why have you come here? You ought to consider me. It was unkind of you to come here, knowing all that Miss Medwyn told you."

"I'm not to blame for this chance meeting; but a letter would not have done, indeed it would not; no, nothing but a few—ever so few—spoken words. And if I had failed to see you, I think I should have despaired."

"I hate the word despair; you must not talk tragedy. Would you mind picking up my locket? It is there, at that tuft of dark grass."

"What a very pretty locket!" said he, presenting it to its owner. "And that little bit of work, the rose in rubies, and the key in yellow topaz, that is the device of a branch of the Vernons."

"Yes," said Maud; "a very dear friend gave it to me."

"I was in hopes you wore it as your own," he said; "it would have given me a right to claim a cousinship."

"But have you really a right to bear the Rose and the Key?" asked Maud.

"It is quite true," he answered, smiling. "One of our family, a lady named Rhoda Marston, married a Vernon five hundred years ago; at least the College of Heralds, while there was such a thing, used to tell the story; and we intermarried after, and that gave us a right to quarter the Rose and the Key. In our old shield it is often quartered. I think it such a pretty device. I wonder why our people gave it up."

"I'm a very bad herald; I did not know there had ever been such a cousinship," said Miss Maud.

"Oh, yes, I recollect hearing the paper read when I was a boy. It is more than a hundred years old, and it said that our name was originally Vernon, but that we took the name of Marston from the place granted to our ancestor by the Conqueror. And that a Marston, Sir Guy Marston, it said, I think, was in love with a lady called the Lady Rhoda Vernon."

"Oh! Really?" said Maud.

"A long time ago, of course. The lady from her name, was called the Rose, the Rose of Wyke it is in the legend. In one of their raids the lady was carried off by the lances of the Earl of Northumberland, and imprisoned, and held to ransom, in one of his many castles; but in which, Sir Guy could not learn. But the lady contrived from her place of captivity to send him, by a sure messenger, a rose, which he took as the emblem of *his* Rose; and learning from what castle it was sent, he raised his hand to the wall, and taking down his battle-axe, he said, 'Behold the key of Percy's keep,' and so the story says he undertook the adventure, and rescued the lady, and hence came the device of the Rose and the Key."

"Then there were Vernons on both sides, and you are a Vernon," said the young lady.

"My ancestors have borne the name of Marston for five hundred years, but our real name is Vernon." With a saddened change of voice and look, he said: "I can't understand you, Maud; I think you might be more frank with me. I think, knowing the torture of my suspense, you might tell me how you wished me to understand all that passed at the Wymering ball. Tell me frankly, and I shall trouble you no more; do you wish all over between us, or will you give me a chance?"

"What do you speak of as having occurred at the Wymering ball?" asked the young lady, evasively.

"Oh, you must know," replied Charles Marston, his jealousy overcoming all other considerations. "I mean your having given so many dances to Captain Vivian, when you refused me more than one; and you had thrown over other men for him."

"Suppose I tell you that I have a perfect right to do as I please, that I say that I will neither be questioned nor lectured by any one, there would be an end of all this."

"Certainly, Miss Vernon; and you make me feel that I have, for a moment, forgotten myself."

"But I won't say any such thing. I tell you, frankly, that I don't care if I never see Captain Vivian again. I had reasons of my own for all I did; I told you so beforehand; and it seems a little strange that you should assume that there can be none but unkind ones."

The reply that had opened with so much fire and spirit, grew gentle, reproachful almost, as it ended.

They had come now, from walking very slowly, quite to a standstill under a hawthorn-tree, that stretched a friendly shelter from the steep bank.

"Heaven bless you for that reproof, because there is hope in it. Oh! how I wish, Miss Vernon, you were what you seemed to me at first, poor and almost friendless. I think my devotion might have moved you, and the proudest hope I cherished was that some day you would permit me to lift you from your troubles. But now I feel it is all changed. When I saw who you were my heart sank. I saw my presumption, and that I ought to renounce my folly, but I

could not; and now what dare I ask?—only, perhaps, that you will allow me still to be your friend." He took her hand. "No, Maud, that could not be. I could not live and be no more to you than friend." He spoke in great agitation, and kissed the hand he had taken. "Oh, don't withdraw it. Listen for one moment, in mercy. I am going to say what is quite desperate. You will tell me now, Maud, can you ever like me?"

"We have been on strange terms for a long time—I hardly understand them myself. We may meet again, and we may never see one another more in this uncertain world. If I were to answer you now, as you ask me, I should speak as recklessly as you say you have spoken. But I won't answer. I don't know you well enough to give you a promise, and I like you too well to take leave of you for ever. I like no one else. Perhaps I never shall; perhaps I shall never like any one. Let all remain as it has been a little longer. And now I have said everything, and I am very glad I met you. Will you agree to what I have said? Are you content?"

"I do agree; I am content," he answered.

A mountain of doubt and fear was lifted from his heart in the assurance, "I like no one else." And the words, "I like you too well to take leave of you for ever," had made him tumultuously proud and happy.

"And now we must say good-bye. If you want to hear of me, write to Miss Medwyn, but not to me, and you must not come here again. I don't act from caprice. I have good reasons for all I ask. Now I must go home; and you must not follow me one step more. Good-bye."

He held her hand for a moment, and said, "Good-bye, darling, but only for a little time. Good-bye."

And he kissed it passionately.

She turned and left him hurriedly, and with hasty steps walked homeward.

CHAPTER XLVIII. A SURPRISE.

So Maud had all but confessed her love. Filled with a strange and delightful agitation, she followed the path towards the Hall.

Crossing the stile she stopped for a minute and looked back. How infinitely fonder that vague love had grown! In that one hour her character was saddened and softened for ever. For the first time, on leaving him, she felt a great loneliness. She almost repented that she had not ended all doubt and hesitation in the matter. But there was an alarm when she thought of Lady Vernon. She did not know what powers she might have under that terrible will, in the shadow of which she had, for the last few weeks, begun to feel herself dismayed.

In the sweet reverie in which already the melancholy of a care quite new to her was mingling, how incredibly short the walk home proved!

She lifted up her eyes before the door, and saw the flight of white steps, and the noble doorway with its massive florid carving, friendly too, as all things seen unchanged since childhood are. Sad a little now, for the first time, it looks to her, with an altered face, in the slanting evening beams, and a smile of reproach seems to light it mournfully. She will take her flight, as others have done, from the old home, generation after generation, for two hundred and fifty years. It does not look like home, quite, any longer.

Great heiress as she was, if all went right, she knew generally that her position might be immensely modified by certain possible events. She knew that under certain circumstances her mother had what amounted very nearly to a veto on her marriage, and that she hated the Marstons. Was she likely to sacrifice her feud to please a daughter, of whom she scarcely concealed her disdain?

Who quite understood that complicated and teazing will of her grandfather's? He had spent half his life pulling it to pieces and putting it together again. It was his hobby. Wherever he went, or whatever he seemed to be doing, his mind was always working upon it. He left it, he confided, a few days before his death, to his attorney, in a very unfinished state. He left behind him, nevertheless, such a tesselation of puzzles, so many provisoes, exceptions, conditions, as no layman could disentangle; and his chief earthly regret, on his death-bed, was that he had not been spared some six years longer, to elaborate this masterpiece.

There was uncertainty enough in her actual position to make the future anxious.

On the shield over the hall-door stands forth the sculptured Rose and Key, sharply defined in the oblique sunlight. The interest of those symbols of heraldry, after a moment's contemplation, made her think of the "shield-room," as the peculiar chamber I have already described was called, and to it she turned her steps.

She passed through the smooth-floored, silent hall, and along a corridor, and opened

the door of the shield-room. It is so spacious a room that she did not hear a sharp voice speaking at the further end, with great animation, until she had entered it.

Her eyes, on entering the room, were dazzled by the western sky glaring through the three great windows, and for a moment or two all the rest looked but shadow. But she soon saw better, and the picture, touched with light, came out of the darkness.

It was Mr. Tintern's voice that was exerting itself with so much spirit. He was leaning back, in an easy posture, with his leg crossed, his arm resting on the table, and his hat and walking-cane in his other hand, reposing on his knee.

Round the corner of the table, which was not a very large one, and fronting the door, sat Lady Vernon, with a pretty little pocket-book in her hand, in which she seemed to have been making notes with a pencil; near her sat Doctor Malkin. The angle of the room, which formed a background for him, was a good deal in shadow, but a sunbeam glanced on his bald head, which shone in that light as red as blood.

There was one figure standing, and that completed a rather odd party of four. It was the slim figure of a long-necked, lantern-jawed man, with long hands, folded one over the other, a saintly smile, a head a little plaintively inclined to one side, and something indefinably villanous in his one eye. He seemed to be undergoing an examination, and Mr. Tintern rose suddenly, gazing upon Maud, and suspended his question as she advanced.

The same light that flamed on Doctor Malkin's burnished head, also showed this lank, roguish face very distinctly, and Miss Maud instantaneously recognised Elihu Lizard.

Nearly all the party seemed put out by the interruption. Mr. Lizard made a soft step or two backwards, receding into shadow. Doctor Malkin stood up, staring at her, as if not quite sure whether he saw Miss Maud or a spectral illusion. Mr. Tintern, who, as I said, had started up, advanced, after a moment's hesitation, jauntily, with his hand extended gallantly.

But the young lady had stopped short, looking very much confounded.

Lady Vernon was the only one of the party who did not appear much disconcerted.

"Come in, dear, come in," she said, employing the very unusual term "dear." "There is nothing to prevent you, that is, if you have anything to say."

"Nothing, thanks; no, mamma. I had not an idea you were busy—how do you do, Mr. Tintern and Doctor Malkin?" she said, but without delaying her retreat beyond the brief space it took to utter these hasty salutations, and gave them each a little bow.

What could they be about? This vague wonder and misgiving filled her as she ran up-stairs.

Mr. Tintern she knew to be a magistrate. That odious Elihu Lizard, the sight of whom chilled her, was plainly under the ordeal of examination, when she had surprised them all together.

Why had Doctor Malkin looked at her, with an expression she had never seen before, as if she were something horrible?

What was the meaning of Mr. Tintern's cringing smile, and deprecatory, almost agitated, air?

Maximilla Medwyn had always told her that Mr. Tintern had an interest under that will which was adverse to hers. She would spend that night over the printed copy of the will, which Mr. Coke had given her, and would try to understand it.

Her mother! Yes, she appeared just as usual, and not at all disconcerted. But she never was the least put out by anything. Never. Her mother! What was she thinking of? No, if there was anything under discussion which could injure her, her mother was surely unconscious of it.

She was in her own room, alone, standing at the window with her hands folded together, thinking, or rather, thunderstruck.

Except her mother's, which was always negative, and therefore inflexible and inscrutable, every countenance she had seen, even the features of Elihu Lizard, wore a new and ominous expression which dismayed her.

"I wish I had my cousin Max to talk to," she thought, "or any living creature to consult. How lonely I have always been! Is there any creature in the house who, under a risk of mamma's displeasure, would tell me the plain truth?"

So, wishing in vain, she at last rang for her maid. It was time to dress for dinner.

"Jones, do you know why mamma saw Doctor Malkin and Mr. Tintern in the shield-room to-day? She does not usually sit there?"

No, Jones did not know.

"Did you see that ill-looking man, blind of one eye, who was also in the room?"

"No, miss, not I."

"Well, Jones, I'm very curious, and you must try to make out all about it, mind,

and tell me to-night when I come up to bed. Don't forget."

So Jones promised, and did her best; but nothing was to be learned, except that the blind man in question had had refreshments in the housekeeper's room, and that the housekeeper was of opinion that he was one of those missionary folk, whom Lady Vernon was pleased to encourage.

There are some pictures which, we scarcely know why, seize the imagination, and retain their hold on the retina; and ever and anon, during a troubled night, the obscure background of that spacious room, and the figures touched by the horizontal glare of sunset, were before Maud.

Miss Vernon was one of those people who rely very much upon instincts and intuitions: felt uneasily that the spectacle of that strange quartette conveyed to her a warning; and that all that was needed was the faculty of reading it aright.

ANOTHER EVENING AT MOPETOWN.

In due course of time I found myself again at Mopetown. When I say that no one else got out or got in at the station, and that I was taken away in a sort of ricketty one-horse omnibus, up a slushy hill, into the town, and that I was received with as much respect at the Dolphin as if I came to lie in state there, it may be conceived that the fortunes of the place were not improving. I had to stay over the next day; certain duties of inspection, which it is not necessary to dwell on, forcing me to resort to the place. It was a streaming, splashing night, and I repaired to the coffee-room, where a monk might have made a retreat without any one to interfere with him.

I was reading the Mopetown Argus in a disconsolate fashion, having written some letters—and it seems to me that a letter written by coffee-room gas-light has a specially dismal flavour of its own—when a tall, large-whiskered gentleman looked in, then looked out, and presently came back with the landlord. Though his business seemed confidential, he talked in a loud, semi-theatrical manner.

"You see, the thing should be pushed. You should force the people in. We gave just such another thing before I left Quaverton, for poor Romano's widow. The best people came in. I got the thing done—I worked it. Even the Little Sappho put her teeiny shoulder to the wheel."

I noticed that as this gentleman dwelt on adjectives of the affections, his voice fell into a tenderly plaintive key, and his mouth collapsed with a mournful smile. The landlord, no doubt thinking of his tap, had no views at all upon the subject, and got away as soon as he could. The loud gentleman walked about impatiently, pulled at his whiskers, then said, with much deference, to me:

"Sad case this, sir. We are all putting our shoulders to the wheel."

I said first, "Indeed!" expressive of interest, then added that "I had not heard," in reference to the case.

"Bless me! Why it's in the Argus. Poor Smallpage, the curate, left a widow and five children, and without a halfpenny. The people of this place want to do something for the poor creatures, and I have been putting them in the way of doing it. But they understand nothing here, sir. This place is an utter imposture from beginning to end. I was trepanned here, sir, I and my family, under false pretences. They're barbarians. No taste, no culture, no civilisation, no trade, no healthy wish for the refining influences of music. Mrs. Jackson, my wife, a masterly performer on the instrument, a pupil of De Bagge's—my two daughters, who studied under Prunello—the Little Sappho, whom Ringsend, the member for Quaverton, said could teach Grisi and Mario and the whole kit—all thrown away here; a case of pearls before swine."

"A case of pearls," I repeated, smiling. "But as to Mr. Smallpage's family, I presume this is some sort of a concert——"

"Precisely, sir. I have set the thing going. I have organised the entertainment, I and my family. It is for the drones here to do their part. You will be here, of course?"

I begun to answer with hesitation. But he interrupted me with gravity, "Oh, but you should stay. You really should. In such a cause as this one does not stand on ceremony, and I push a ticket wherever I can. Oh, you should support a thing of this sort, you know; chee-arity," and again Mr. Jackson's voice assumed the plaintive tone, "before all. Stalls half a crown each, family ticket to admit four, seven and six. I think, myself, under the circumstances, the man of humane feelings would indulge himself in a family ticket. What do you say? I have a number about me."

I was induced to take a family ticket, and the charitable vendor, I remarked, went away much elated, and passed straight into

the bar—no doubt to have the pleasure of drinking my health.

How the next day passed in Mopetown I will not detail. It is enough to say that it rained the whole time, and that open air work on such a day, and in Mopetown, is not exhilarating. When I returned in the evening it was nearly time to go to the concert. I found a bill on the table, which I read eagerly, wishing to see what I was to have in return for my family ticket, in addition, of course, to the luxury of one's feelings in doing a work of charity.

The Rooms were tolerably full; that is, there were some seventy or eighty persons present. I seated myself in my stalls, which I observed enjoyed a solitary distinction in being labelled with white cards, marked with "reserved" in a female hand—I say I seated myself in my four chartered places, occupying one with my hat, another with my great-coat, the third with my umbrella, and the fourth with my own person. Then I read my bill leisurely. It ran thus:

GREAT ATTRACTION!

THE MENDELSSOHN JACKSON FAMILY FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY.

In aid of the fund for the support of the widow and orphan children of the late Reverend HERCULES SMALLPAGE, B.A., left completely destitute.

The quality of mercy is not strained;
It droppeth like the gentle dew from heaven.
SHAKESPEARE.

MR. MENDELSSOHN JACKSON

(Late Professor of Music at Quaverton, and Joint Director with Signor de Bagge, of the Melodia Society in that city)

Begs to announce to the inhabitants of Mopetown, that he will give a

GRAND CONCERT

IN AID OF THE ABOVE MERITORIOUS CHARITY.

MR. MENDELSSOHN JACKSON

Will be assisted by the Members of his Family.

MRS. MENDELSSOHN JACKSON

(Late Soprano Assoluta at Owlet Chapel and the Melodia Concerts),

MISS PERDITA JACKSON

(Of the Melodia Concerts),

MISS JUANITA JACKSON,

MR. HANDEL JACKSON

(Late Organist at Owlet Chapel),

AND

THE LITTLE SAPPHO!

Who will, on this occasion only, sing some of the choice lyrics which have won her reputation in the western district as the English Musical Prodigy!

While I was perusing this document, Mr. Mendelssohn Jackson, who had come on the platform once or twice in a restless way, suddenly attracted public attention by hurriedly advancing towards me, removing the occupant of the nearest chair, which was my hat, and commencing in a hurried fashion behind his hand:

"This is a very painful thing. Most awkward for me. Would you mind stepping into the artist's room a moment?"

"What do you want?" I asked. "You can say it here."

"Well, I would prefer not. It's as to the deposit. Scandalous!"

"A deposit?" I said.

"Yes. Deposit for the Rooms, you know. It seems it's a rule of the Rooms not to allow the thing to begin unless two pounds is put in their hand, or they take at the door."

"They? Who?" I said, much bewildered.

"The Rooms, of course. You see, though the tickets have been taken, all the money has been promised, and will be sent in later."

"All the money?" I said.

"Oh, the preliminary expenses. The posters alone have swallowed up more than that. Now if you would——"

"Oh, I fear I can do nothing," I said. "I have taken a family ticket—three more places than I want. You must really excuse me."

The next moment Mr. Jackson had seized on the landlord of the Dolphin, and in a few moments it was evident that an arrangement had been effected. Then Mr. Jackson bustled "behind," and the concert began.

After a moment's pause the new and unpainted deal door at the side opened, was shut again with hesitation, quivered on its hinges, was closed abruptly, as if a discussion were going on, and was then finally opened. A little procession emerged. Mr. Mendelssohn Jackson, with Mrs. M. Jackson on his arm, Mr. Handel Jackson, between Miss Perdita and Miss Juanita Jackson. Mr. Jackson père plunged straight at the piano, while his family deployed into line with almost military precision. Mrs. Jackson was a portly matron, and, with her daughters, was anxious about the arrangement of the folds of her dress.

Blow Gentle Gales, the late Sir Henry Bishop's work, was the first piece, and Mr. Jackson, pounding the chords vigorously, and growling a rasping bass, encouraged the "blowing" with good effect. The well-known cannon-shot, introducing the "look, look again!" made us all start. There was much swelling, rising, and falling, and the working of the Jackson mouths was in itself a delightful study; for at the placidly piano parts they all assumed a sweet and kindly look, as if

enjoying ecstatic bliss in company; but on the invitation of the paternal rumble, they changed at once into a haughty and determined ferocity of purpose. The final chord, which was somewhere down at the Jackson waists, was a prolonged and scornful growl. Mr. Jackson leaped from his piano, led away his family in the same order, and the new deal door closed on them. Again it opened, closed, hesitated, and out came Mr. Jackson, leading his spouse, with ceremonious politeness, to the front. All was lost, I mean that All is Lost, the well-known vocal gymnastic feat for which Mrs. M. Jackson had, years ago, been famous, was the next performance. She attacked it with extraordinary vivacity and courage, putting her poor broken-down voice at all the jumps and intricate "ha-ha's" with something like desperation. I cannot say she got over them, but she certainly got through them, splashing, plunging, and kicking, breaking down the fences, and smashing the bars. All this time her husband working at his leaps, and I must own very diligently supplying, with sudden crashes and "rumbles" in the bass, the deficiencies of his decaying spouse; now throwing his whiskered head back, now bending it down as if he wished to kiss his own hand. But the way the lady shook her head, leaned to this side and that, as if leaning over a balcony, and the awful contortion of visage with which the last "high" scream was got out—like a back tooth—was amazing. Mrs. Jackson's "high A" in old days was a favourite theme with her husband. When we had applauded, and the lady had made three profound reverences, as though bouquets had been showered on her, Mr. Jackson took her hand, and smiling graciously, led her slowly off.

Again the deal door opened, and Mr. Handel Jackson emerged briskly to play what I found was set down in the bill as:

Deux Morceaux. (*a*) The Ripple. } Handel
(*b*) Reaper's Dance. } Jackson.

These were little things of his own. Handel Jackson, I could see, was partial to little things of his own; and I have no doubt at Owlet Chapel always played those works, preferring them to the hackneyed and rococo effects of the old masters. Then we had another concerted piece; after that a solo from Miss Perdita Jackson—Cherry Ripe—which was really fairly well sung, and gave satisfaction; but I could see she was looked on rather contemptuously by her own family. Then came the real feature of the evening, "by special desire," we were informed, though I doubt if the musical intelligence of the place was sufficiently advanced to "desire specially" any such article. This was a duet from the Elisir d'Amore, rendered by Mr. and Mrs. Jackson in a dramatic manner, without accompaniment. The coquetting, tossings of head, closing of eyes, and shyly significant confidences to the audience on Mrs. Jackson's part, seemed to convey that there was a vast deal of secret and mysterious business going on which she was engaged in circumventing; while Mr. Jackson nodded and winked (in Italian), and repeated a great many words very fast, made as though he was going to cry, laughed loudly, and had sly jokes all to himself. All this never interfered with the profound gravity of the audience, which, strange to say, deepened as the humour of the performance was supposed to increase—a result, by-the-bye, which I have not unfrequently observed even in the case of real, genuine, Opera House Italian buffos. When it was done, Mrs. M. Jackson was led across, seemed again to acknowledge a shower of imaginary bouquets, and retired smiling, led out by her partner.

At the beginning of the second part, Mr. Jackson came forward, and said he threw himself on our indulgence; he hoped we would overlook what was only the result of an unhappy fatality. Miss Juanita Jackson was labouring under a cold, and could not sing the song down for her in the programme. If we would allow him "to depart from the arrangement set down for us in the printed bills" he would substitute Mrs. Mendelssohn, who had consented, under the circumstances, to give the rendering of Bid me Discourse, as sung by her at the Melodia. "I may be pardoned for adding," said Mr. Jackson, "that the occasion was a most interesting one; for among the audience was General Stubbs, whose daughter was later placed under my own personal tuition; and the general," said Mr. Jackson, looking at his programme in a hesitating way, as if overcome with modesty, remarked, "that he heard it sung once before in the same style, and that was by the lamented Malibrawn de Beriot!" Here we applauded heartily.

The song having been somehow got through, we had Mr. Jackson himself in a solo, for which, before sitting down, he pulled the piano round at an angle, so that a side-view of him could be obtained by the audience, lifted the top, let down the music-stand with a clatter, tried the pedals, and

rubbed his hands in a ruminative manner. Then assuming quite a nautical air, he dashed into the Bay of Biscay. Mr. Jackson's voice was quite gone, but that was no matter, for he spoke, or rather declaimed, the various descriptive passages of the lyric with great slowness of articulation and pantomimic effect. Thus, when sunny weather was overhead, he wore a smile on his beaming face, which was always turned to us, though his person was sideways, as mentioned. He seemed to convey a complacent pride and benignity in his sea-faring life, his good ship, &c., and when he reached the well-known burden, he broke into a brisk canter, as it were:

A-a-s we lay,
A-a-all th' day,
I-i-n the Be-ha-hay-o'-ho-Biskeyo!

But when the sky became overcast, and the terrible storm came on, his face justly reflected the warring of the elements, his hands worked as if belaying ropes, or at the wheel. When young Mr. Jackson, behind the deal door, conveyed an imitation of the distant gun with, I think, two books struck together, the mariner half rose from his seat, and shading his eyes with his hand, looked out over the top of the piano, through the blinding mist. "A seeail! a seeail!" we heard him cry. Then taken on board, he sang jocundly and rapidly,

The-hen we sail
Wi-hith a ge-ail,
Fro-hom the Bee-ay-hay-haw-hof-Biskeyo!

This deserved applause, and got it.

Finally came the gem of the evening, reserved for the last, the Little Sappho. Her father was charming in his tenderness and paternal care. He came out and stood looking in at the open deal door, inviting out, and smiling and nodding to the audience. Then he shook his head lightly, as who should say, "Too shy and tender; be indulgent," tripped away, and returned slowly, leading the Sappho. She was only six years, at most, judging from her dress, which belonged to the nursery, little blue socks, little frock, &c. But the face, as happens not unfrequently with your infant phenomenon, betrayed a greater age. She made a little nursery curtsy. Her father placed a chair, lifted her up on it tenderly, all the time smiling and nodding at the audience, then drew the piano nearer, and with the upper part of his body stretched over, struck the chords in a quiet, encouraging way, as if fearful that a breath might put her out. She sang My Pretty Jane in an appropriate infantine fashion, and all the while Mr. Jackson smiled at us and at her, encouraging, deprecating. She got through very respectably, and we encored her.

Such was the concert of the Mendelssohn Jackson family. It might be considered successful in itself, though not for the end for which it was constituted. So, at least, I gathered from the organiser, who strode in gloomily to the Dolphin the next morning.

"Expenses, sir, awful! All swallowed up. Always the way of the world. Yet, here I have given the professional services of my family gratuitously — yes, absolutely gratuitously, sir. Not a halfpenny for myself. I wouldn't touch it, you know, sir, in the cause of charity."

A STATE OF SIEGE IN CUBA.

"We are in a state of siege!" says my friend Don Javier, editor of a Cuban periodical called El Sufragio Universál.

"Y bien, amigo mio; how does the situation affect you?"

"Malisisimamente!" returns Don Javier, offering me a seat at his editorial table. "The maldito censor," he whispers, "has suppressed four columns of to-day's paper, and there remains little in the way of information besides the feuilleton and some of the advertisements."

The weather is sultry and oppressive. The huge doors and windows of El Sufragio Universál office are thrown wide open. Everybody is dressed in a coat of white drill, a pair of white trousers, is without waistcoat, cravat, or shirt-collar, wears a broad-brimmed Panama, and smokes a long damp cigar.

The sub-editor, a lean, coffee-coloured person, with inky sleeves, is seated at a separate table making up columns for to-morrow's "tirada," or impression. Before him is a pile of important news from Puerto Rico and San Domingo, besides a voluminous budget from that indefatigable correspondent, Mr. Archibald Cannie, of Jamaica. More than half of this interesting news has been already marked out by the censor's red pencil, and the bewildered sub looks high and low for material wherewith to replenish the censorial gaps. Small, half-naked negroes, begrimed with ink—veritable printer's devils—appear and crave for copy, but in vain.

"Give out the foreign blocks," says the editor, in the tone of a commander.

The foreign blocks are stereotyped columns supplied by American quacks and

other advertisers to every newspaper proprietor throughout the West Indies. On account of their extreme length and picturesque embellishments, these advertisements are used only in cases of emergency.

While the foreign blocks are being dispensed, the localista, or general reporter, enters in breathless haste. He has brought several fragments of local information. Four runaway negroes have been captured by the police. Two English sailors have died of yellow fever in the Casa de Salud. A coolie has stabbed another coolie at the copper mines, and has escaped justice by leaping into an adjacent pit. A gigantic cayman, or shark, has been caught in the harbour. The localista has also some items of news about the insurrection. The rebels have increased in numbers. They have occupied all the districts which surround our town, destroyed the aqueduct, cut the telegraph wire, and intercepted the land mails to Havannah. There is now no communication with the capital save by sea. Troops have again been despatched to the interior, but their efforts have proved ineffectual. Upon their appearance, the rebels vanish into the woods and thickets, and there exhaust the patience and the energies of the military.

The sub-editor notes everything down, taking care to eschew that which is likely to prove offensive to the sensitive ears of the authorities. The material is then given out for printing purposes; for his worship the censor will read nothing until it has been previously set up in type. As many hours will elapse before the proof sheets are returned with censorial corrections, Don Javier proposes a saunter through the town.

The usual military precautions against assault on an unfortified place have been taken. The entrances to the streets have been barricaded with huge hogsheads containing sand and stones; small cannon stand in the plaza and principal thoroughfares. At every corner that we turn, we are accosted by a sentry, who challenges us three times over: "Who goes there?" "Spain." "What kind of people?" "Inoffensive." And so forth. The theatre, the bull-ring, the promenade, are all closed for the season. The masquerading and carnival amusements are at an end. Payments have been suspended, and provisions have become scarce and dear. The people whom we meet have grown low-spirited, and the sunny streets look gloomy and deserted. We glance in at the warehouses and manufactories, and find everybody within attired in military costume; for many of the inhabitants have enrolled themselves as volunteers for the pleasure of wearing a uniform at their own expense, and of sporting a rifle provided by the government. The names of those who object to play at soldiers have been noted down and their proceedings are narrowly watched.

A couple of Spanish frigates lie at anchor in the harbour; for our feeble-minded governor threatens to bombard the town if the rebels should effect an entrance and stir up the inhabitants, their countrymen, to revolt. The garrison has been considerably augmented by the arrival of fresh troops from Puerto Rico and Spain, who are quartered indiscriminately in the jail, the hospitals, and churches, to expire there by the score of yellow fever, vómito negro, and dysentery. Meanwhile the besiegers make no attempt at assault, but occasionally challenge the troops to sally from their stronghold by firing their sporting rifles within earshot of the town.

One day a great panic is raised, with cries of "Los insurrectos! Los insurrectos!" followed by a charge of mounted military through the streets. It is reported that the insurgents are coming; so everybody hastens home, and much slamming of doors and barring of windows is heard. But the alarm proves a false one; and, with the exception of a few arrests made by the police, just to keep up appearances, no further damage results.

To reassure the terror-stricken inhabitants, and to prove to them the gallantry of the Spanish army, our governor determines on making another sally with the troops.

Curious to learn how warfare is carried on in the wilds of a West India country, I enrol myself in a company of volunteers who have obtained permission to follow in the rear of the sallying expedition. My uniform consists of a blue-striped blouse, white drill trousers, and a broad-brimmed Panama, to the band of which is affixed a vermilion cockade embellished with silver lace. The Spanish troops muster some five hundred strong. Their hand weapons are of the old-fashioned calibre, and they carry small field guns on the backs of mules. Every man is smoking either a cigarette or a cigar, as he tramps along. His uniform is of dark blue cotton, or other light material suitable to the tropical heat. He carries little else besides his gun, his tobacco, and a tin-pot for making coffee; for the country through which he is passing

abounds naturally in nearly every kind of provender.

The besiegers have altogether disappeared from the neighbouring country, and for the first few miles our march is easy and uninterrupted. But soon the passes grow narrower, until our progress is effected in single file. Occasionally we halt to refresh ourselves, for the weather is intensely hot, and the sun blazes upon our backs. To insure ourselves against brain fever, we gather a few cool plantain leaves and place them in layers in the crowns of our Panamas. Our way is incessantly intercepted by fallen trees and brushwood; but we can see nothing of the enemy, and hear little besides the singing of birds and the ripple of hidden water. Many of our party would gladly abandon the quest after human game, and make use of their weapons in a hunt after wild pig or small deer, which animals abound in that part of the country.

Alto! We have waded at last through the intricate forest, and halt in an open plain. It is evening, and as we are weary with our wanderings, we encamp here all night. A moon is shining bright enough for us to read the smallest print; but we are disinclined to be studious, and smoke our cigarettes and sip our hot coffee. Men are despatched to a neighbouring plantation in quest of bananas, pumpkins, Indian corn, sugar-cane, pine-apples, pomegranates, cocoa-nuts, and mangoes, and with this princely fare we take our suppers. Then sleep overtakes us.

Early next morning we are called to arms by the sound of firing, which seems to reach us from a hill in the distance. The noise is as if a thousand sportsmen were out for a battue. Our commander assures us that the enemy is near at hand, and soon crowds of mounted men appear on the hill before us. With the aid of our field-glasses we watch their movements, and can distinguish their dresses of white canvas, their sporting rifles, and primitive spears. A body of them surrounds a thatched hut, over the roof of which droops a white banner with a strange device, consisting of a silver star on a square of republican red. The enemy appears to be very numerous, and as he marches along the ridge of the hill, his line seems interminable. All our opponents are mounted on horses or mules with strange saddles and equipments.

Adelante! We advance to meet the foe. Some hours elapse before we can reach the thatched hut, as our course is exceedingly circuitous. We find the hut occupied by a decrepit, half-naked negro, but our birds have flown. The negro, who tells us he is a hermit, and that his name is San Benito, can give us no information as to the whereabouts of the enemy, so we make him a prisoner of war. The opposing forces have left nothing but their patriotic banner behind them. This trophy our commander possesses himself of, and bears off in triumph. Then we scour the country in companies of fifty; but we meet with nothing more formidable than a barricade of felled trees and piled stones. Once we capture a strange weapon, made out of the trunk of a very hard tree, scooped and trimmed into the form of a cannon, and bound with strong iron hoops. Upon another occasion we discharge our rifles into a thicket whence sounds of firing proceed, and we make two more prisoners of war in the shape of a couple of runaway negroes. At length, exhausted by our brilliant campaign, and with more than two-thirds of our army afflicted with fever, we retreat in good order, and return to town. Before we enter, the governor, accompanied by a staff of officers and a band of music, comes out to meet us. A cart, driven by oxen, is procured, and upon it are placed the captured cannon and rebel banner, the former of which is as much as possible concealed by Spanish flags and flowers. A procession is then formed, and in this way we pass through the streets, followed by the military band, which plays a hymn of victory in commemoration of our triumphant return. The houses become suddenly decorated with banners, blankets, and pieces of drugget suspended from the windows, and the inhabitants welcome us with loud cheers and vivas.

Immediately upon quitting the ranks I repair to the office of El Sufragio Universál, for the purpose of reporting to Don Javier the result of our expedition. Strange to relate, that gentleman has already perused a glowing account of our glorious campaign in El Redactor, the government organ in Cuba. The editor hands me a copy of that periodical, and there, sure enough, is a thrilling description of what we might have achieved if we had had the good fortune to encounter the enemy in the open field!

But the editor has some strange news for my private ear. He tells me that a filibustering expedition from the United States has landed with arms, ammunition, and a thousand American filibusters, in the Bay of Nipe, not many leagues from our town. With this reinforcement it is confidently expected that the rebels will make

an attempt to attack the Spanish troops in their stronghold. Don Javier, who is a Cuban to the bone, is sanguine of his countrymen's success. With a few more such expeditions, he is sure that the colony will soon be rid of its Spanish rulers. Then the editor gives me some extraordinary information about myself. It appears that during my absence, El Redactor has made the wonderful discovery that I am one of the agents of an American newspaper, has referred in its leading articles to the "scandalous and untruthful reports" published by its American contemporary, and has insinuated that henceforth the climate of Cuba will be found by many degrees too warm for me. Don Javier is of opinion that my residence in the island will be no longer safe, and he recommends immediate flight. From similar sources I gather certain facts which leave no doubt that I am the object of assassination. I consult my consul upon the subject, and he too advises me to absent myself, at least until affairs are more settled. I adopt his counsel, and embark in the first mail steamer which leaves our port. A host of my Cuban acquaintances accompany me to the vessel. Foremost is my friend the editor of El Sufragio Universál, who, after wishing me a prosperous voyage and a hearty "vaya usted con Dios," secretly hands me a bundle of papers, containing, among other matter, the "leavings" of the censor for the past fortnight, for the edification of my friends in New York. So I leave Cuba in a state of siege; in which condition, it may be added, it differs but slightly from Cuba in any other state.

RACKSTRAW'S CLIENT.

IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAPTER II.

I WAS again in London, in my chambers, and at work, real work. I was no longer making believe to toil in the way of noting cases I should never have to cite, or laying up stores of legal lore to rot and waste from disuse and lack of ventilation, nor wasting time in poring over a twice-read newspaper, or in gaping at my own wan reflection in a dusty looking-glass, or in staring vacantly out of window at the smoke, the tiles, the chimney-stacks, the sparrows, and the cats. I had real briefs now; not in excess, but still to a sufficient extent, and, what was more important, I was earning real fees!

There came a knock at the door. I found, standing on the landing without, a strange, shabby-looking man, wearing a long drab over-coat, with flapped pockets at the hips, a rusty hat, much too large for him, and pressed down nearly over his eyes, and a soiled woollen comforter twisted twice or thrice round his neck. He nodded and grinned. I recognised him. It was Michael Runt.

"You want me?"

"Only two words, counseller." He entered as he spoke, gliding past me before I had time to stop him, and entered my sitting-room.

"Now what is it?" I asked, sharply. For, quite apart from the consideration that he was interrupting my labours, I greatly objected to the man's presence. It was true enough that he had been my client, but it was equally unquestionable that he was a very consummate scoundrel. I had, as I thought, done with him, and wanted to set eyes on him no more.

He sank into a chair, and waved his hand towards me, as though asking me to be patient with him. He was very short of breath, gasping and panting, open-mouthed.

"Your staircase tries a cove," he said presently, speaking with difficulty, in husky, wheezing tones. "The mill is a fool to it; especially to one as is touched in the wind, as I is—I don't mind owning to it. It's allays bellers-to-mend with me now."

He jerked out his sentences with a curious spasmodic action of his whole body. He had removed his hat, and was wiping his wet forehead with his transparent, claw-like hand, smoothing and plastering his hair, as though trying to bring it down over his eyes. He looked very villanous and wretchedly ill, worse, in every respect, than he had looked even in the dock at the assizes.

"You did the trick handsome, counseller, at that trial. I will say that. The nobbiest counseller as ever I had; and I've tried a few. I called to say 'thank you,' counseller."

"There was no occasion to do anything of the kind," I said.

"Oh, but there was, counseller. If it hadn't been for you the other counseller'd been one too many for me. And that there judge, he came down heavy on me, he just did. But the persecutor, he was a soft-head, uncommon."

"Well," I said, "you had a narrow escape. I hope it will prove a warning to you not to get into trouble again."

"I'm fly to that gammon," he observed, with an odious wink. "That's what they

allays says when they can't convict. I am in trouble again, for the matter of that. I don't know as I've ever bin out o' trouble. I'm a magsman; that's my line. Thieving's meat and drink to me, thieving is. I took the persecutor's watch. In course I did. You know that well enough. But, bless you, it was out of my hands in a minute. They wasn't likely to find it on me, not likely. But you're fly to all that!"

"The case is done with, and I wish to hear nothing more about it. I'm busy, and I beg that you will go."

"Busy? Well, you haven't always been busy, have you now, counseller?"

"I insist upon your going."

"You wasn't so very busy down at Westminster a little while back, when all those coves was capering about in big wigs. Good as a pantermine I call it. Never saw such a kit of beaks together all at once."

"You saw me there?"

"I just did. Hanging about you was. Regularly up a tree you looked. I saw you. Bless you, I tried your pockets. There was nothing in them—only keys. And keys, one can get keys anywheres."

"What were you doing there?"

I began, in spite of myself, to feel an interest in the man's conversation.

"The old fakement, and"—here he lowered his voice to the hoarsest of whispers, and came so near to me that I felt his noisome breath strike hot upon my cheek—"you didn't find nothing in your bag when you got home, perhaps?"

"What!" I cried, starting up. "It was you then——"

"Hush! In course. I shoved the flimsies in. I made a post-office of you. Cos why? I saw the stop (detective) had his eye on me. I knew I was wanted. I allays am. But I wasn't going to let 'em find anything on me. I never does."

"You were arrested, then?

"Wrong, counseller; not that time I wasn't snaffled. It looked like it. But the stop was after another party. Billy-go-fast, I think it were. But there was a many at work that morning. So I vamosed."

"You—what?"

"Sloped. Got clear away. But I kept an eye on you. I wanted to get the flimsies back, while you were star-gazing and fly-catching about the courts. But blowed if you wasn't too quick for me. You was off sharp, as though you knowed what you'd got in your bag. Perhaps you did. Most likely. Counsellers is pretty fly, generally speaking."

"And you think——"

"To get the flimsies back? No; come, counseller, I ain't so jolly werdant as that comes to. Get a pat of butter out of a dog's throat! A flimsy back from a counseller! Not that. You've parted with 'em long ago. Trust you for not keeping 'em long."

This was not quite true. Still it was sufficiently so. Certain of the notes—by far the greater number of them—yet remained in my desk. But, as I have already stated, a portion of the money, stolen money, as it now too plainly was proved to be, I had certainly under very pressing circumstances converted to my own use.

"But how did you come by those notes?" I demanded.

"Come, I like that, counseller," he answered, laughing, and disclosing a hideous, irregular array of yellow teeth. "Axing me to criminate myself! You ought to know better than that, you know. But there's no harm in trying it on, and, after all, I don't know as there'd be so much harm in my telling you; for you're my counseller, you know, out and out, ain't you, now? My attorney-gineral—that's how they call 'em, ain't it?" He laughed horribly as he said this. "So I'll tell yer—only it's dry talking—and I'm that short of wind I'm like a bust balloon. Ain't you got a drain of summut anywheres about the place? It's wonderful how I feel to want filling out."

He was clearly very much exhausted, and I strongly wished to hear his story; so I gave him a tumbler of brandy-and-water, feeling deep shame, I admit, at the thought of entertaining the creature as a guest, and countenancing his longer stay in my room.

"You'll drink too. That's right. Here's success to trade—yours and mine; they ain't so very different when all's considered. Success to trade, and no flies! Uncommon good tipple—warms one all through—only, that's the worst of it, it starts my cough off fresh."

He was seized with a most painful and violent fit of coughing, and for some minutes he was quite incapable of speech. Hateful as the man's presence was to me, I could not but feel sincere pity for his wretched state. It was plain to me that he was mortally stricken.

"Churchyard work, my cough, ain't it?" he said, as though he had read my thoughts. "I've got my sentence. No doubt about it. And I don't suppose there's no tickets-of-leave where I'm going to.

Still, I never was one to caterwaul. 'Game to the last,' that's my motter. And now about these flimsies? It's soon told. They was got on the cross, I needn't say. I shouldn't have had 'em else. Still, it was a bit of chance work. I was down at the races, Newmarket, October Meeting. There was a lot of us out, but not doing much. But there was a row of a sudden. There often *is* rows, you know, at races. A welcher was in trouble; hustled, mauled, shoved, bonneted—you know how odd times a welcher gets served out—they was all at him at once. You couldn't see a feature or a scrap of him, not a hair of his head, for the hands that was on him, tearing him to ribbons. Well, the flimsies was my share. Most was on to his leather bag. But I'd watched him before. I see him stow the flimsies inside his shirt. I knew there wasn't much in the bag. I was horrid frightened at first; I thought I'd only got his dickey. It was quite a mercy; but I found I was to-rights with the flimsies."

"What became of the man?"

"Why, counseller, you don't suppose I stopped to ask?" He looked at me with an air of mingled pity and wonder. "Who cares what comes of a welcher? I expect he deserved all he got. It wasn't no business of mine if he didn't. I ain't pertickler, but sport's sport, and bar welching. He had hardly a rag on last time I see him. It's much if he got away alive and in his skin. If he did, *that* wasn't perfect, I'll go bail. I did'nt stop to look on. The slops (police) was fly to me. I was druv about here, and there, and everywhere. They'd hardly give me a chance. Never had such a job as I had with them flimsies. I'd them about me for days; couldn't get rid of 'em nohow. Walked up to town. Still the slops had their eyes open. Then I was at Westminster, as I told you—you know the rest. It was light come and light go. The luck was with you. Good health, counseller. You see I did you a good turn, and you did me one. I expect the flimsies about set you up; you looked precious down in the mouth when I first clapped eyes on you."

I was struck, perhaps more than I need have been, by the curious way in which he abandoned all claim to the notes, made sure that I had already disposed of them, and regarded all chances of regaining them for himself as something quite out of the question. After all, they had never been really his property. However I might deal with them, there certainly was no sort of reason why I should restore them to him.

"It was a rare look-out, you see," he resumed. "The rags" (he called the notes indifferently rags and flimsies) "were as good as gold. The welcher didn't know the numbers—was sure not to. He'd taken them in the way of his trade. Catch a welcher coming forward to identify flimsies! Why he dursn't. Only if the slops had lagged me, they'd have nabbed them sure enough; leastways, I should never have seen them again. So you got 'em. I ain't sorry. It was flimsies well laid out. A retaining fee, don't you call it? Not but what I spotted you. I traced you here. I'd have had 'em back if I only could. Then I was took for that ticker business. 'That's the man to defend me,' I says, meaning you, counseller. 'Luck will come of it,' I says. And luck did come. You pattered splendiferously at them 'sizes. I made sure of a long term of penal, with that beak so heavy agin me and all; but you got me off, and you'll do the trick again, now won't you, counseller? You're my counseller now, as I said afore. Why you might be counseller and attorney-general to the whole swarm of us. Here's wishing——" He drank more brandy; more coughing followed.

"You're snug up here, and quiet—uncommon," he began again presently. I was very anxious for him to go; but he seemed more and more disinclined to move. He had drawn a second chair towards him, and was resting his legs upon it. Now he lighted a pipe and surrounded himself with clouds of very strong-smelling tobacco. He went on drinking, smoking, and coughing. There seemed no chance of his speedy departure. "And it's respectable, too, in its way. And you're respectable, too—that is, fairish in *your* way, you know, counseller. You might do a tidy stroke as a fence up here."

"As a what?"

"A fence. Come, you know what that is—a receiver. You're that already, you know, counseller, along of them flimsies. Disposing of stolen property: that's what the slops call it. It's a great thing for a fence to look respectable. You know, counseller, we might work it together prime. It would be long before they'd dream of looking here for a fence. Rags, tickers, plate, sparks (jewels), would be all one to you. Now here's a trifle——" He produced from his pocket a morocco leather case—evidently a jeweller's—and was proceeding to propose that I should, as a fence, buy the contents of him.

This was too much. What more he said I hardly know. I insisted upon his leaving me forthwith. It was with great difficulty

I could induce him to move. I dared say nothing of the police, or the "slops" as he preferred to term them. I feared that if I called in a constable some dreadful disclosure about the stolen notes might ensue. I might be entangled in a criminal charge. The thought was horrible. At last it occurred to me to threaten that if he did not depart at once, I would never again, under any circumstances, undertake his defence. I need hardly state that I had already quite decided to have no further dealings with so dreadful a client, upon any pretence whatever. This argument availed. With much reluctance, and pausing first to empty his tumbler, he withdrew. How thankful I was to close the door behind him, to hear him slowly and rather unsteadily descend the stairs, coughing violently as he went. I flung the glass out of which he had been drinking into the grate. I opened the window to let out the tobacco smoke, and, as it seemed to me, a certain pungent odour of felony with which the air of the room was tainted.

Suddenly I heard a noise in the court below, angry voices and something of a struggle. I looked out. My client was in the hands of the police. He was, to use his own words, "lagged" again. And this time there seemed little question that stolen property, the jeweller's case and its contents, would be found upon his person, and that altogether the probability of his being convicted of felony was very strong. From my window I could hear the click of handcuffs, and I could see the wretched man led away in custody.

A day or two later I read in the newspaper a report of the examination of Michael Runt, before a police magistrate, on a charge of robbery from the window of a West-end jeweller. The prisoner was described as a notorious offender, well-known to the police, a professional thief, adorned by his criminal friends with the nicknames of "Slippery Mike," the "Roarer," the "Coughing Stag," &c. The theft had been accomplished by the process known in thieves' language as "starring the glaze;" that is to say, a pane in the jeweller's window had been cut with a diamond, and articles of value extracted while the shopman's attention had been occupied by some idle questions asked by an accomplice of the depredator, affecting to be a customer. The operation was said to have been performed with singular skill. I pictured to myself the lean hand and long fingers of my client at work through the aperture he had made, deftly and noiselessly securing the jewellery he had designed to appropriate. He was a detestable person; but I have not a doubt, I had reason to know, that he was a highly adroit malefactor.

Owing to some accidental cause the evidence adduced before the magistrate was incomplete, and the accused was remanded for further examination. I rather think the police applied for delay in the committal of the prisoner, alleging that there were many other charges of a similar kind to be brought against him.

I was in great dread lest I should be once more applied to to defend my client. The thought of again holding a brief for him was intolerable to me. What might he not do? What might he not say? He would probably address me from the dock familiarly as "counseller," or his "attorney-gineral." He might openly allude to the fact that he had lodged stolen goods with me, or describe me as a "fence," and refer to his smoking and drinking with my consent in my chambers! The result would be simply ruinous to me. I should be publicly proclaimed the accomplice of a notorious felon.

So, very ill at ease, I waited to see what would happen. I carefully watched the newspapers for a report of the re-examination of the accused. But I could find no further mention of the case. It seemed somehow to have dropped out of notice.

At last I ventured to make inquiry on the subject at the police court. I was not, I own, without a certain fear that I should be unfavourably regarded by the authorities, possibly arrested as one in league with the prisoner. The police receive in so mysterious a way such peculiar and extensive information that it was quite conceivable they were already acquainted with the remarkable transactions that had taken place between Mr. Runt and myself. To my great relief, however, I found myself viewed as yet another of the large number of sufferers, who had come forward upon the prisoner's arrest to urge charges against him.

I then learnt that the man was dead.

"Yes, he's out of our reach now," said the police sergeant, rather grimly. He died in the House of Detention just after the first remand. It was sudden at last, but he'd long been ailing, and was as weak as a rat when he was first brought here. I thought him shamming, for he was always an uncommon artful customer. But it was a true bill. He'd cough enough to shake a man to bits. The doctor said it was a wonder he'd held together so long. It was a pity, too, for we'd as nice a case

against him as you could wish. We could have convicted him ten times over. However, it's no use talking about it. He's saved us some trouble, perhaps, and got off without punishment at last — if he has got off. It's not a thing one can be quite clear about. He was an out-and-out bad one, though not without a good point or two. However, it ain't worth while our reckoning him up now. He's safe not to touch the police any more, nor they him."

It was weak of me, perhaps, but I own to feeling saddened at the sergeant's news. After all, the poor dead felon had been my client. He had been a very hopeless creature. Had he lived, his reform was just possible: not more than that. But he had died as he had lived, the man I have described. He was more deserving of pity in death than in life.

And the bank-notes? They were never claimed. I kept them carefully a long time. Then I added to them other notes, equal in amount to those I had appropriated. Finally I packed them in an envelope, and addressed them to the secretary of a hospital devoted to the cure of the consumptive. At any rate, the stolen money wrought certain good at last.

THIRTY DAYS AT THE DIAMOND FIELDS

I WILL not weary my readers by any description of the long, tedious, thirsty, and burning pilgrimage of our little caravan of diamond hunters from Port Natal to the banks of the Vaal. It is my object to tell, as briefly and plainly as may be, what I saw and experienced in the diamond fields themselves.

Early in the morning of the 2nd of December we finished our weary journey, and outspanned (encamped) on the banks of the yellow Vaal. The river is a fine, rapid stream, but owing to the recent rains, was swollen, turbid, and threatening. We could not get the waggons over anyhow, and it seemed very uncertain when we should do so. We might have to try the diggings on the side where we were first. Before breakfast I reconnoitred the ground, and collected what information I could. At noon I walked up to Robinson's Drift, crossed in a boat, landed at the upper diggings, and walked from one end to the other. I met several Natal people I knew, and went over several thriving stores. They were well supplied, and prices were reasonable. Meat was plentiful; beef and mutton fourpence per pound. There was no regular post from Penel, but every Saturday a car ran between Hebron and Penel. Passengers, seven shillings and sixpence each; letters, sixpence. At the lower diggings, two miles further on, found ——. He had been there five weeks, and not found a single diamond, though every one round him had been more or less successful. His party was on the move. I went prowling all over the diggings, and returned tired and hungry. More furious, heavy rain, thunder, and lightning.—December 3rd. Went all over the diggings on the Natal side, and the diggers showed me one or two diamonds said to have been found there. One advantage of our encampment was the good feed for cattle. On the other side cattle had to be driven five or six miles, morning and evening, to graze. While we were at a digger's house a terrific storm came on, and detained us several hours. No one seemed to mind it, for these wild storms are of daily occurrence.—Sunday the 4th, we spent quietly, taking a stroll up the river-bank.—December 5th. I went over Robinson's ground; I talked to the diggers, but could get no authentic information as to the findings. Robinson was very sharp, and wanted to get people to try his land. He told me his terms.

If we could not get across I felt we must try Robinson's Drift. In the mean time I sent Ash across the river to take two claims, which he did, just in the very middle of where people have found diamonds. We got the waggon unloaded, and set a man to work making cradles. We also shifted all the meal and flour into fresh sacks. The black ox died, but I trusted the rest would do, though the grass was execrably bad. In the evening I was told that a Dutchman had come and driven all our cattle into his kraal. We instantly set off to rescue them. The Kaffres all promised to stand by me. When we came to the kraal I ordered my Kaffres to drive the cattle out, and they went in to do so. Some Dutchmen instantly ran out of the house. One of them, mad with rage, was calling for his gun. In the mean time another Dutchman jumped into the kraal, screaming and shouting, and away scuttled my Kaffres, like so many sheep. There was nothing for it, therefore, but to come to terms, and after a long palaver peace was proclaimed. I was to pay ten shillings for the damage my erring cattle had done, and to get off the land. I told the Dutchmen to come to the waggon and

finish the business, and started back to camp, only wishing I had had one Englishman with me.—December 6th. The Dutchmen arrived, and I treated the matter in the tent diplomatically. I inquired what they wanted. I asked where my cattle were to go. The river was up, the oxen could not get across. I told them I was inquiring for grass on the adjoining farm. Then I produced some rum, acknowledging their sovereign right to their own land. I did not wish to trespass, but what was I to do? There was a large island in the river; what could they let me that for by the month. The head Dutchman said a sovereign, and that would give me the sole right of grazing. So we struck hands on the bargain. He then observed my biscuits, and wanted some for a child. I gave him a pound. One of his friends then asked if I had paid the ten shillings. He said no, but for a few biscuits he would say no more about it. Of course I agreed to this, and my would-be murderer of a few hours before parted from me the best of friends. We put the cattle on the island, and found there was capital feeding. My man, Colenbrander, returned with news that grazing was one shilling and sixpence per head per month, so my diplomacy with my choleric Dutch friend was not unsuccessful.

December 7th. We were busy all day unloading the carts and allotting the stores, for I had determined to divide our party, and send some of them across the river with the cart, to begin at once working the new claims. Some diggers came, and wanted to get leave from the Dutchman to work on a spot which I thought promising. He refused them, so I resolved to try him on my own account, as some of us were bound to remain on the Natal side with the waggon.—December 8th. After an early breakfast I got four of my oxen from the island, and took the cart and packed part of our goods in it. The oxen swam after the boat. We very nearly lost one, but he finally landed safe and sound. I sent the things over with four Kaffres, in two boat-loads. They then got two large barrels, and fastened one before and one behind underneath the cart, and towed it after the boat. Directly it got into deep water, but fortunately near the bank, it did exactly what I had expected, it slowly and majestically toppled over and sunk on its side. The excitement was intense. The men lost their heads, and were hopeless, but I set to work. I told them to tow the cart round, hooked on a chain, sent all the blacks into the water, and by dint of yells and threats, made them combine to right the cart and pull it on shore. I fastened the casks to the sides of the wheels, which I fixed with a chain, then pushed the cart into the water boldly, and away it went grandly ever so far down the river, but still safely, to the other side. I then crossed, faint with hunger and parched with thirst, for it was dangerous to drink the yellow mud of the Vaal. When I got to the camp, I rushed to a store, and don't think I ever enjoyed anything so much in my life as the three tumblers of claret and filtered water I drank. We then pitched our tent, and shortly after turned in. Through what an uproar we tried to sleep! Guns firing, music playing, men singing or quarrelling, carts busy in the moonlight, taking earth down to the cradles, dogs barking, diggers shouting; but I was so tired that even this conglomeration of discordant sounds could not keep me long awake.—December 9th. We took off the top of the cart, and settled the ground round our tent. I walked along the banks of the muddy yellow river, to secure a place for our cradle. We commenced digging that afternoon, and were to wash on the morrow. We heard that an eight carat diamond was picked up to-day on Robinson's Drift. I saw a man who had seen it. Having no great faith in Robinson, I think, though picked up there, it may not have grown there, as the man who picked it up is a Penel digger, who has lots of diamonds with him. A twenty-two carat diamond was yesterday found on Lower Hebron. This day there was an amusing scene in the camp. Three young fellows, successful diggers, mounted on mules, which were harnessed to a light cart, and galloped like madmen up and down the street, waving flags and shouting. Diggers were coming fast to Hebron, and waggons daily arriving. I caught six fish for my dinner, and pickled some of them. I am already a grand hand at making bread, and am fast becoming less civilised and helpless. It was the first very hot night, no breeze, and the mosquitoes tormenting.—December 10th. Carted down several loads of gravel, and commenced to wash.—Sunday 11th. Rested, and took a long, quick walk up the river-side.—December 12th. Unloaded the waggon, and got out planks to make more cradles. After breakfast stowed all away again before moving nearer our claim. Erasmus, for a consideration, drew our waggons, as I did not want to remove the cattle from the island. Had only time to pitch the tent be-

fore dark.—December 13th. We settled the ground, made another cradle, then took the Kaffres, and went to the claim, cleared off the big stones, and dug enough gravel for washing. Crossed the river in the afternoon, to see how they were getting on there.—December 14th. Up at four carting down stuff to the river, and sorting till seven. What a day's work! After breakfast, sorted till one. After dinner, sorting again from three till five. At five we went to the claim to pick enough stuff to wash and sort next day. This lasted till seven, which did not leave much time for anything else.

This diary gives a good notion of a digger's daily routine. If English convicts had to keep such hours, from five A.M. till seven P.M., what a groan would run through philanthropic England! Of one thing I am certain, that sorting pebbles is harder work than picking oakum.

Let me describe the diamond fields in detail. The land I am now looking at on the other side of the Vaal is a long, low hill, sloping gradually down to the water, and covered with low, prickly shrubs. The spot is by no means beautiful or inviting to cattle or man. It is neither picturesque nor promising, yet it contains the very essence of wealth, the choicest treasures of royalty, power, and beauty. There, since the beginning of the world, trodden under foot by savages and wild beasts, unheeded, while Europe has suffered its storms and convulsions, these diamonds have slumbered. The upper part of the sloping hill is composed of orange-coloured gravel, with here and there boulder stones, detritus of old water-courses, cropping out. This gravel is very attractive to the eye, and consists, for the most part, of agates, cornelians, clear yellow stones, and bits of jasper. For the first day or two you feel inclined to make a collection of the best of these; but this avarice wears off when you begin to find the good and sound stones are few and far between, and are nearly as scarce as the diamonds, which, like all good things, are shyest of all. Whenever a spot of this gravel is selected, either by new comers, or from a diamond having been found, the people make a rush, and the whole of the ground is at once divided into lots twenty-one feet square. The new and hopeful hands begin at once to pick and loose up the virgin ground, and after throwing by the big stones, they sift the smaller gravel through a large screen, and get rid of all pebbles bigger than a pigeon's egg. Of course, the man lucky enough to find a diamond bigger than this, is sure to see it in the sieve. All that goes through the sieve is the small gravel or wash stuff. This residuum is carted down to the river early in the morning, and washed in a cradle, which consists of a couple of sieves, the upper one coarse in the mesh, the lower one fine. These sieves are placed on a frame set on rockers. The gravel is placed in the upper sieve, and one man rocks the cradle, while his companion pours water on all the gravel and fine dust which has washed through the two sieves. The upper sieve is looked over, and the contents thrown aside, while the gravel from the under one, containing pebbles from the size of a hazel-nut to that of a big pin's head, is reviewed on the table, at which we will suppose I and my comrade Ash are sitting. We are in a bower made of branches and an old sail. We each grasp a flat piece of zinc, and commence by drawing a small portion of the gravel towards us like children playing with shells. With one motion of the hand we spread out our store carefully on the table, and with another, like disappointed gamblers that we are, we sweep it contemptuously off; so the diggers here go on, hour after hour, day after day, month after month, and perhaps never, after all, see the welcome gleam of the long-sought diamond. The manual labour is not so great, but, oh! the monotony and weary watching of the stones. It is dreadfully tiring; one's back aches, all one's limbs feel benumbed, and the shoulder-blades have soon their own special grievances.

On Christmas Day, a terrible event happened; my poor Dutch carpenter, Colenbrander, was drowned in the Vaal. Poor young fellow! He, I, two Dutchmen, and two of our Kaffres, had gone to the island to look after the cattle. Colenbrander and I went across in a punt, the others waded across. After we had looked at the oxen, and had had a good rest under the trees, we proposed to return. One of the Dutchmen had gone, the other said he would swim across; Colenbrander said he would also, and asked me to carry his clothes over in the punt. I made no objection to his going, as the river was not very broad by the island, and there was no dangerous current. The Dutchman and Colenbrander went in, and I followed in the punt. About half way across I saw Colenbrander, as I thought, dip his head under to wet it; he then swam on a few strokes and did it again, making no noise beyond the puffing noise usually made by swimmers. In a second or two he went

down again. Beginning to be alarmed, I pulled the punt up, not at all sure that he was in need of it. He came up for a moment, then sank for ever. I was horror-struck. I could not realise it. Not a cry, not a gesture, to lead me to imagine that he had been in danger, or was even frightened. The Dutchman, who was swimming only ten yards off, had not the faintest idea of the poor fellow's danger. I cannot describe my stunned, paralysed feeling of horror, wonder, and regret as I stood on the opposite bank and looked at the muddy waters which hid the poor fellow from us. We had no means at hand to recover the body. I ran back to my tent, changed my clothes, and went across to break the sad news to Ash. I then ran to Alexander, and he, with generous alacrity, mustered ten or twelve Natal men, and went at once to the spot in a boat; we tried, till sun-down, to recover the body, but all in vain. Next morning the Natal men again mustered willingly, but were still unsuccessful. I spent that night and the next in Alexander's tent miserable enough. Just after tea on the Monday night, as I, Alexander, and Ash were sitting together, I suddenly saw something near a box glitter. I said, "There's a snake in the tent."

Ash replied, "What nonsense."

I persisted. "I am sure there is," I said, "for I caught its eye, and when I moved it drew back."

Ash was so positive I was mistaken that he would move the box, and prove I was in the wrong. He suddenly jumped back, crying, "There is, indeed, a snake, and a big one too." He and I had both sticks, and hit at it, but we could not get a fair blow at its head, which it kept shielded behind the box. Presently it brought its head round and hissed, and we all bolted, thinking it was coming after us. Out went the candle in the confusion of our frightened rush, and we could not venture back against our stealthy and deadly enemy in the dark. We at last got lights, and returned to the tent. I ventured in first with a lantern, expecting to find the evil one exorcised by the alarm. All at once I looked down, and seeing him within six inches of me, leaped back, thankful for my narrow escape. We then fell on him with our sticks, and finally despatched him. He was quite five feet long.

I had just set to work, three days after this, when a Dutchman from down the river came to tell me that poor Colenbrander's body was lying on the bank three miles down. I at once sent a message to Ash to get a coffin made, and borrowing a small waggon, proceeded to fetch the body. The Dutchmen in the neighbourhood lent their aid, and wrapping the body in blankets, we laid it in the waggon till the grave was ready. At four o'clock, Ash, Alexander, and Ryan came over; I read the funeral service, and we lowered our comrade into the grave. I thought as I read the verse, "We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain that we can carry nothing out," how we were all toiling for riches that by the grave's side seemed so worthless. No tidings of the lost oxen from Borkoff. The letters to Durban from here take nineteen days, but heavy rains often swell the rivers, make the roads almost impassable for the oxen, and delay the mails.

January 1st. Hurrah! At last, after washing and washing, and scraping and scraping over some tons of gravel and pebbles, we have found—not a Koh-i-noor, oh, dear no!—quite the reverse, only a small diamond about as big as a mustard-seed. Still it is a diamond, and it is a good omen. There are more where that came from. Hurrah! we shall rock the cradle now with renewed hope. We may make our fortunes yet. I am afraid we have got the gambling spirit of the true digger upon us now. The fever has seized us at last, and the chill and ague of the first reaction of disappointment has gone for ever. Another month we may be laughing and dancing with hats full of diamonds, or be driving back our oxen to Natal in rueful rags, footsore and half-starved. Never mind, my boys, rock away. We don't care now, even if there is a rock ahead. Heaven helps those who help themselves.

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